

A close-up portrait of P.V. Narasimha Rao, an elderly man with a receding hairline, looking directly at the camera. He is wearing a light-colored, possibly white, shirt with a subtle pattern. The background is dark and out of focus.

P.V. NARASIMHA RAO


SELECTED SPEECHES

1991-92

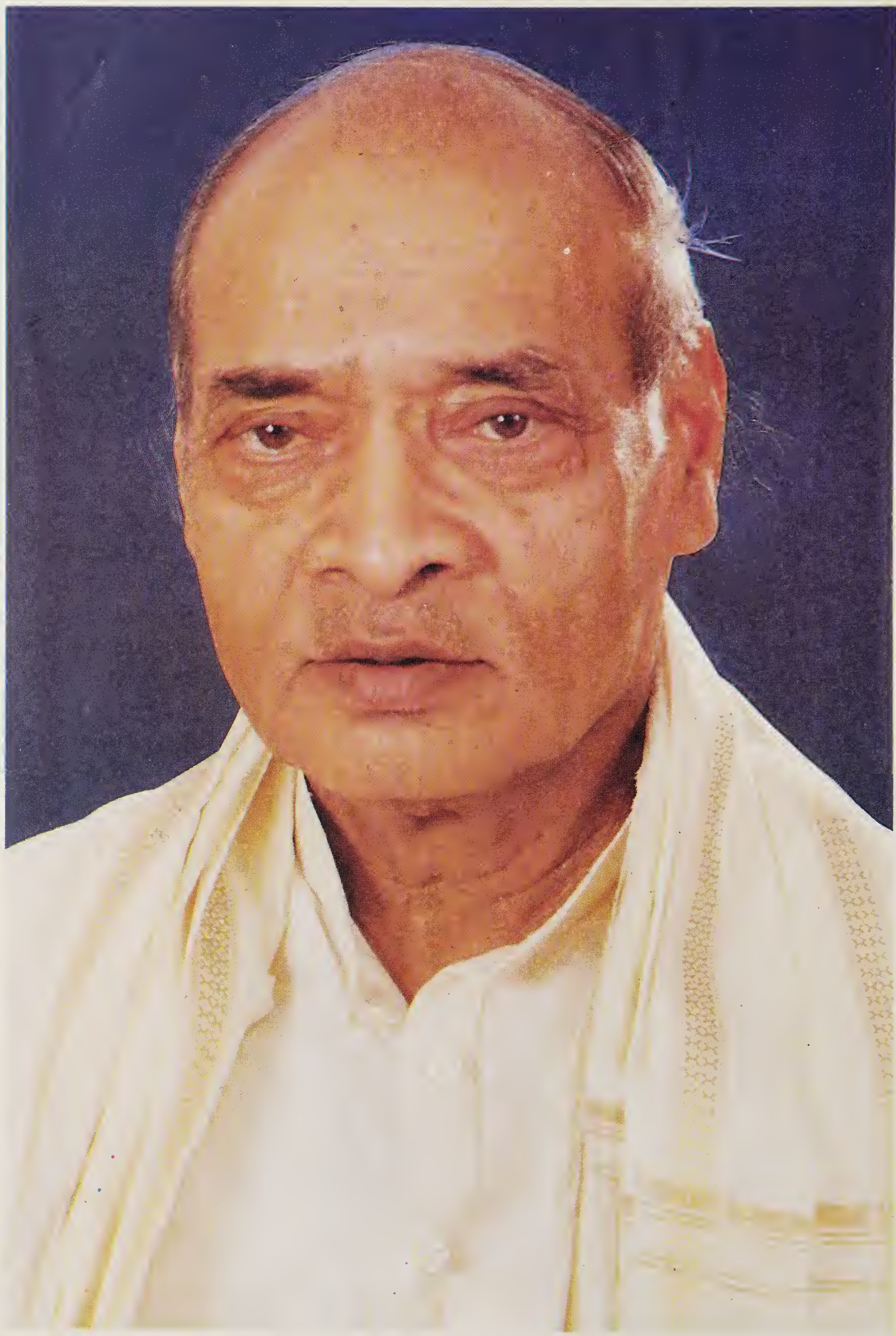
This volume presents a selection of the speeches of the Prime Minister, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, from 22 June 1991 to 30 June 1992.

When Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao assumed office the country was passing through a difficult situation. The divisive forces were eroding the confidence and trust of the people. There were challenges to secular values. These were to be repulsed and the nation had to be rallied for the new tasks. The speeches of the period reflect Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao's determination to lead the country out of its difficulties towards all-round development and new social and economic horizons.

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P. V. NARASIMHA RAO

SELECTED SPEECHES

VOLUME I
June 1991—June 1992

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Preface

This is the first volume of selected speeches of the Prime Minister, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, from his assumption of office in June 1991 up to June 1992. Besides speeches, the volume also includes broadcasts, messages, interviews and forewords. Speeches originally delivered in Hindi, Telugu and Marathi appear here in translation.

The items are grouped under eight sections — National Affairs, The Economic Scene, Science and Technology, Education, Culture and Sports, Health and Social Welfare, International Affairs, Press Conferences and Interviews, and Tributes, Forewords and Messages.

In each section, the items are in chronological order. When a section deals with more than one subject the items are regrouped. Where two or more speeches deal with the same theme, they appear under one heading.

Here an attempt has been made to include the more important speeches of the Prime Minister during June 1991-June 1992. The volume does not profess to be a complete record and also party speeches have been kept out.

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I

National Affairs

Towards Wiping Every Tear From Every Eye

I ADDRESS YOU at a difficult time. Rajiv Gandhi's assassination brought home to us in a brutal manner the grave danger to the stability and integrity of the nation. A barbaric act snatched away from us a great leader in his prime. But his vision of India will live on and will continue to inspire and guide future generations.

In their hour of crisis the people of India have stood as one. They have given a befitting reply to the forces which seek to destabilise the country and subvert democracy. The electoral process just completed has yet again demonstrated the strength and vitality of Indian democracy. It has once again demonstrated the unity of the Indian people beyond challenge.

The dangers posed to the country by problems in Punjab, Kashmir and Assam are very real. The general law and order situation is a matter of alarm, as is the communal situation. Government will address itself to these problems with determination and single-mindedness. We will ensure that the unity and integrity of the country are safeguarded. While genuine grievances of the people will be redressed, terrorism and other fissiparous tendencies will be dealt with firmly. I am certain in my mind that we shall succeed in this endeavour for we draw our strength from our people who have behind them a long tradition of amity, co-operation and togetherness and deep love for their motherland.

The economy is in a crisis. The balance of payments situation is exceedingly difficult. Inflationary pressures on the price level are considerable. There is no time to lose. The Government and the country cannot keep living beyond their means and there are no soft options left. We must tighten our belt and be prepared to make the necessary sacrifices to preserve our economic independence, which is an integral part of our vision for a strong nation.

In the pursuit of this objective, my Government attaches the highest priority to restoration of the health of the economy. In the past, we have faced such crises and overcame them. The economy has the strength and the resilience. The people have the resolve. Together, we shall overcome. This is a national endeavour, in the pursuit of which we should rise above sectional interests and partisan politics. In this task, we seek the co-operation of all.

We are determined to address the problems of the economy in a decisive manner. The postponed Union Budget will be presented in a month. India shall maintain its unblemished and perfect record in meeting its international obligations. The dialogue with the multinational financial institutions, in particular the IMF, would be continued. Fiscal discipline must be observed. Hard decisions would have to be implemented to manage the balance of payments situation and to curb inflation. At the same time, we will ensure that the process of adjustment is managed in such a manner that it protects the poor and sustains the momentum of growth.

This Government is committed to removing the cobwebs that come in the way of rapid industrialisation. We will work towards making India internationally competitive, taking full advantage of modern science and technology and opportunities offered by the evolving global economy. Utmost efficiency will be fostered. We cannot tolerate waste, inefficiency and indifference to quality, in the public or any other sector. We also welcome foreign direct investment, so as to accelerate the tempo of development, upgrade our technologies and to promote our exports. Obstacles that come in the way of allocating foreign investment on a sizeable scale will be removed. A time-bound programme will be worked out to streamline our industrial policies and programmes to achieve the goal of a vibrant economy that rewards creativity, enterprise and innovativeness. I see a very special role for non-resident Indians to play in this process. We shall make investment in India a rewarding experience.

Agriculture will receive the Government's close attention. The progress made so far should be consolidated and conditions created for greater and diversified progress. Close attention will be paid to expanding irrigation and the development of dry land agriculture. Extension services will be strengthened and modern technology brought to the doorsteps of our farmers. A fair price for farmers will be ensured.

It will be our endeavour to improve the quality of life of millions of our people who are living in want and deprivation. The betterment of the rural poor will receive the Government's closest attention. It will be our endeavour to develop appropriate linkages so that the pressure on land in rural areas is eased and more employment opportunities are generated with a view to tackling the problems of unemployment, underemployment and low incomes. Administration will be made more responsive and it will be ensured that every rupee spent on development reaches the intended beneficiaries. Existing policies on financial assistance will be expanded for rural housing. Close attention will be paid to the

improvement of the primary health and infrastructure of primary health, particularly in rural areas.

The strengthening of the Public Distribution System will receive the Government's immediate attention. The Public Distribution System would be expanded not only to cover the rural areas but would also sharply target the poor. The Public Distribution System would be made an important instrument in our fight against rural poverty and in improving the quality of life of our people. We have to evolve a strategy that at once combines policy initiatives with the full enforcement of the laws of the land.

We are committed to protect the constitutional and legal rights and the legitimate interests of the religious, linguistic and ethnic minorities. We shall set up Special Courts to try communal offences. A composite Rapid Action Force will be constituted to quell communal riots. The Minorities Commission will be provided statutory status with a view to enhancing its effectiveness.

It is unfortunate that at the very juncture when India needed to give a lead in this historic endeavour, its international prestige suffered setbacks and relations with friends and neighbours were neglected. It will be the endeavour of my Government to restore India to its place of honour in the comity of nations and ensure that India's voice is once again heard with respect and attention in the world fora. Our relations with neighbours will enjoy the priority they deserve so that our region becomes an area of peace, prosperity and stability.

I have formed a broad-based weaker section oriented Council of Ministers. This is only the beginning, the beginning of a programme to reach out to the men and women of India in every nook and corner. My team understands the heartbeat of the people.

Our vision is to create employment, eradicate poverty and reduce inequality. We want social harmony and communal amity. We want a more humane society. As the twentieth century draws to a close, we cannot live with poverty and destitution among large sections of our population. Gandhiji said that it was his ambition to wipe every tear from every eye. That is the vision which will inspire the work of my Government.

Towards a Great Change

MR. SPEAKER, SIR, I am grateful to the honourable Members who have participated in this debate and given me invaluable views, opinions, guidelines, admonitions, etc., etc. I am grateful to them because we stand at a point in the history of this country, where all these become relevant just because we fall short by ten or twelve votes. That is the immediate reason. But, Sir, that is not really the reason which I see from the experience of the elections. Before this election we know that a lot was being written and said about a hung Parliament. Even before the elections were announced, wise leaders of this country warned that the days of massive majorities are over. This country should know, the people should know what to expect in future and they should also be mentally and politically prepared to face situations where no single party would get the majority and be able to form the Government. It is not that this was unanticipated. These situations were anticipated and I am sure each of the political parties in this country had anticipated—not necessarily was sure about it but had anticipated in passing, my party certainly did. And in that view, we had to consider how this party would function or the Government of this party would function if the people voted it to power. I was asked times without number, Sir, by pressmen during the campaigns, whether I believed that the Congress party would get a majority. I said: “Yes” The next question was, “If you do not get a majority, what will you do?” The answer was: “I would not say anything about a hypothetical question. I am sure that I am going to get a majority.” That was what any leader of a party going to elections would say. At the same time, I made it very clear because of the warnings uttered by our wise leaders that whether I get ten more or ten less, it does not matter so much to me, my style of functioning is to be one of consensus. I said this. I have gone on record publicly to say that I will not ride roughshod, the Congress party would not ride roughshod and we would like to create areas of agreement. These were the words that I had used.

We would like to keep areas of disagreement aside because we have both areas. And the delicate situation, the very dangerous situation in which the country finds itself today demands this approach of all parties and I said certainly of my party. I agree that this is going to be my approach never mind whether we get

ten less or ten more. Even if we get 300 we cannot solve the problems just by the strength of numbers. That time has gone. The problems of the country are much too complicated for one party or one party Government to go ahead single-handedly to try to solve them. It will help if you have a majority. It will be a little difficult if you do not have a majority. But in any case, to say that if I have a majority I need not consult anyone else and I will consult only if I fall short would be wrong. That has not been my approach.

On the fourth day of my assumption of office, because one or two days were spent in giving portfolios, I had separate meetings with revered leaders of the opposition parties. All of them have worked with me. We have worked together. I have very good relations with each one of them. So I called them. They were good enough to come. So far as Mr. Chandra Sekhar is concerned, I called on him as is the custom. We discussed generally about how to go about it. Because we are ten short, it did not deter me from forming a Government and it did not deter me from going ahead with my consultations in general with all the parties. And I am glad that the response was encouraging. The realisation that today the mandate of the people, whatever it may be, positively or negatively is not for going to them again. This mandate had gone home. It has been realised by all parties, all Members. And apart from the other impracticability of having elections in the next two or three months the political message was clear that you do not expect a massive majority hereafter but you do try to run a Government and solve the problems of the people which are crying for solution.

You cannot be harping on what you do not agree with. Keep them aside and go ahead and serve the people.

So, my interpretation of the result is this. The people have come back to the Congress but with a warning. They say, yes, Congress will form the Government but Congress will not ride roughshod. The Congress will have to try its very best to find a consensus with other parties. But still the people said, if there is a party in which we have faith that it will run the Government, it is the Congress Party and no other party.

Having said that I would certainly agree that the consensus that we need could elude us sometimes. Suppose I want a constitutional amendment which my party considers very important, it is obvious that I cannot bring it unless Advaniji agrees, unless Vishwanathji agrees, unless other friends like Indrajitji and Somnathji agree or at least I have enough agreements to push it through even if there is a little disagreement here and there. It happened before. In 1977

the Janata Party had a massive majority in this House and the Congress had an equally massive majority in the other House. From the 42nd to the 44th amendments we held discussions, negotiations. We were members in the opposition at that time. We said: "We will not allow this to go through unless you allow that to go through". So after a good deal of negotiation we agreed ultimately on the 44th amendment. So that is how many of the provisions which were brought in the 42nd amendment got modified in this 44th amendment. That is the only way of running the government in this country successfully hereafter. I believe that. Unless the people in their wisdom again give a massive mandate to one of the parties I do not see any other way of running the government.

On the fifth day when we had individual discussions, I called the leaders to come for a joint meeting where the absolutely desperate economic situation in the country, which brooks no delay at all—I want that situation to be explained by my Finance Minister. I could have waited. In fact I would have waited had the situation been not as desperate as that. Today it is the fifteenth of July. If those measures had not been taken on the fifteenth of July—it was clear, absolutely certain—that India was going to become a defaulter. Once you become a defaulter what happens to the country, what happens to the economy is well known. I do not have to describe it. What happens to inflation, what happens to your credibility, what happens to your credit worthiness, what happens to all the deposits which the NRIs have put in your banks in the confidence that this Government would be stable, any Government in India would be stable and their money would not be jeopardized. Therefore, the absolute urgency of the situation made me request these friends to come and have a little chat, a sitting with my Finance Minister at which all this was explained. Now, we did not tell them two things. Mr Inderajit Gupta has complained about those two things not having been told to them in so many words, but I do not plead guilty in that. When a step like adjustment of exchange rate is taken, I do not think that we could tell that to anyone in advance. I know they are all my friends. I know I need their support. I know if they want to bring the Government down they can. Even so, I would say that it is not fair for them to ask for these two decisions: to send gold outside to be deposited in a bank, so that you can immediately take some money which you need so badly. About those two decisions, it was not fair, it would not be fair on their part to ask and it would not be fair at all on my part to divulge at that stage. All the other measures which were really written about in newspapers times without number. For months and months they were being discussed. Panel discussions took place. So, it is not as if the measures which we

have taken just dropped from the heaven overnight, we were not even three-four days old. How could we prepare all those papers? The papers were ready. The decisions had not been taken and personally I think they were not taken, they could not be taken for very valid reasons. The Chandra Shekharji's Government was not in a position to take those decisions and it is as well that they did not take those decisions. The result was that the accumulated decision-making fell on our head and we had no time to lose and, therefore, we had to take all these decisions.

Now, it was not a piecemeal approach at all. We have taken all the decisions. There is only one thing now which is to come before the people, but it will have to come before the House since the Parliament is in Session and that is the Industrial Policy reforms. I am sure that in the next two or three days we are going to give final touches to it and it will come before the House and it will go before the people. But to say that it is a piecemeal approach, it is not correct. It had very much to do with industrialisation, and the products of industrialisation being sent in trade and export matters. So, there is a multi-faceted thing and which is inter-disciplinary, and it is not a decision or a series of decisions taken within five or six days in isolation. They are not decisions in isolation. They emanated from the same decision or same approach to the problems that are facing today. Now, what have I done? What has the Government done? We know that there are no alternatives to what we have done. We have only salvaged the prestige of this country.

“Sarvanashe Samutpanne ardh tyajati Panditah.”

This is precisely what we have done. I do not say that our economy has been booming or is going to boom immediately. What I am saying is *Sarvanashe Samutpanne*. What would have happened today if we had not done that? We have done it so as to salvage the economy. Naturally there is a long distance to go. This is not all. This is not the final solution, this is only the beginning. If you do not have a beginning, you cannot have an end. Therefore, the journey, the *mahaprasthan* starts today after we have taken these decisions. These decisions have not been criticised... (Interruptions). And what has been the result? This is what I want our friends to understand. What has been the result in the atmosphere? What has been the change in the atmosphere? Within the last one week, the Finance Minister has received literally hundreds of messages from the NRIs abroad saying that they are going to support India now. They are not going to pull their moneys back. People have come from other countries to say: we are here to trade with you let us enter a long-term agreement. Within the next few weeks we will be entering long-term agreements to supply

things to other countries and they might be in a mood to give us some money in advance also to tide over the crisis in which we find ourselves today. Now, these are the immediate fall outs of the decisions taken.

As I said, these decisions are not without hazards. These decisions are not unqualified decisions and I cannot say, I cannot guarantee that these decisions will not bring their own distress and their own disadvantage. But that is where the Congress manifesto and the history of the Congress, the party that runs the Government, comes into the picture. It is not Mr. Manmohan Singh. Manmohan Singh plus Mahatama Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and we, the small people on whom the mantle has fallen, this is a combination. Here is a person who knows what is to be done and here we are who know what the people want. There will be a marriage between the two. There is absolutely no doubt about it. We will not pursue anything which will be against the national interest or against the programmes of the Congress meant for the poor. This is the guarantee that I can give to this House. We go by the manifesto.

Just day before yesterday, we have given some finishing touches to the new Public Distribution System that we want to bring in to this country. Public Distribution System has been talked about. Except in two or three States, it has not been a success. It has not been successfully implemented. For hours and hours we had to go into the loopholes of the Public Distribution System. This would never have happened if it had not been a Government devoted to the poor, devoted to the interests of the poor. So, we had to start work from scratch, being at the grass roots. We will see to it that when the programme comes on the ground, this stuff, these essential commodities will certainly reach the last of the Fair Price Shops in the village. That is the nitty-gritty we have gone into. We have not only enunciated principle. We have not only repeated from the paras of the manifesto, we have gone ahead and arranged for this. Now, before the House adjourns after the session, I am going to announce those things in this House and in the other House. That is the time frame I have kept before myself. How we are going to reform the Public Distribution System, what is going to come in the place of the ramshackle that you have in the name of Public Distribution System today, these things will be clearly brought before the House; I have committed myself. I am now committing before the House. I have committed my Government to this course of action. So, first we take this commitment.

As regards the political aspect, I am waiting for this vote to be passed in this House. I should be very plain. I did not want to

touch the political aspect before the confidence vote is passed by this House. That is in the fitness of things. That is what political or other propriety demands that I should be armed with a right to run the Government the mandate to run the Government. Positively or negatively, by whatever means the voting pattern suggests or allows, the Government should be in a position to run from tomorrow so that I take up these matters. Not that I have not done the home work, I have done the home work, but I will start consultations with other party leaders tomorrow. I have spoken to one of the leaders this morning and he said, 'Yes, you are right, we will start our sittings from tomorrow.' I can assure the House that on these very important matters that have so far defied complete solutions, we have to be in touch, we have to discuss, we have to find a consensus and without a consensus it will not be possible to solve those problems for good. Even with consensus, whether we will be able to solve them within the time frame that we have in mind I am doubtful, but at the same time if there is no consensus there will be no solution, I am absolutely clear on that. So, this is going to be the methodology, this is going to be the approach and with this approach I have come to this House because the President asked me to find out whether this House is prepared to let this Government run from tomorrow. This is the *summum bonum* of the whole thing. We have gone into the question of what the Congress Governments have done and what the others have done. We have bandied insults and abuses times without number in the last 40 years. But at the end of 40 years the people have given this mandate. At the end of 40 years, I am sure they must have considered all aspects of Mr. Paswan's diatribe, I have no doubt about it. They have done it and may be they wanted to tell us also that we have not done so well in the past, so beware. Agreed. I agree that this is so. This is a warning, I take it as a chance given by the people to me to mend the Party Government if there have been any lapses, and there have been plenty of lapses in the past, to correct them in time so that this Government will not really be leading to another national disaster. I would not lead to another national disaster, I would take everybody into confidence to the extent it is possible. Still there are areas in which nobody can be taken into confidence. If Honourable Members want me to tell them what the budget is going to contain, sorry, I cannot do that, and I am sure I won't be asked such questions. So, let us start with consulting each other. In the process of consultation we will immediately find out, we will come to know what is to be discussed, what is to be kept aside. The area of agreement we will concentrate on; the area of disagreement we will keep aside, if possible. Within the area of agreement we give and take. If there

is a view which is better than the Government's view in some respects, I am prepared to take your view and see that what I have started with is modified accordingly. I have no difficulty, I have no inhibition in doing that. That will be the approach. So, this is the approach with which I am entreating this House. I have come to this House with this motion. Whether it is confidence or not, whether in 15 days you could judge, whether you could really judge what we are going to do in future, all this is there, you can ask yourself all these questions to which you may or may not find answers. But at the end of the day you have to vote on this. That is what is before you, that is the vote. That is the thing I am concerned with. I have to run the Government tomorrow, I cannot have the debating society *ad nauseam*. We can debate, we can debate the lapses, we can debate the plus points, the minus points, all these are all right, but the point is that the Government has to run tomorrow and by common consent, as far as I could remember, all sections of the House and the people themselves want that there should be a Government and we should not go back to them with a beggar's bowl saying: "Well, we are not able to run the Government but still give us votes again". This kind of things they will not tolerate. That is why we are here discussing, debating on this motion and this is what I beg of you to consider as the most crucial aspect of the voting today.

Sir, about Assam I just wanted to give a little clarification. It is said that there was a general amnesty and all that was done wrongly. I have to tell the House that we have a State Government there which is dealing with this problem. Left to myself, I would let the State Government deal with the problem without interfering, without taking an initiative from Delhi itself and creating more confusion in the short run, I would see how the State Government deals with the situation, I would not like to come to any hasty conclusion about that. What Mr. Saikia, the Chief Minister before the election did was that he gave a commitment to the people that those against whom there are no cases pending or only small, petty cases are pending—if I have understood his report correctly—will be released. That is what he has done after assuming power. It is not an amnesty in the sense in which those against whom heinous offences are there, have been released. It is not like that. He made a commitment. There was nothing of this abduction in the picture at that time. So, after the abduction, he has naturally started efforts to see that those who have been abducted are not killed. One person has been killed already; we do not know under what circumstances he has been killed. But his first priority is to save the lives of these people and if any exchange or any releases are necessary in order to do that, then as a responsible Chief Minister he will do

that. We should watch the situation for some more time before pronouncing a verdict on what has been done. It is not a question of general amnesty that everybody is being released as *quid pro quo*. As I said, it is not a *quid pro quo*. It is a one sided commitment which we gave before the election and which he has implemented after the election. But the rest, it is a question of negotiation and that is going on. That is how I understand. I also understand that the local units of all the parties whose leaders have criticised this decision today are in favour of this decision. They have passed a resolution. I have got a copy of that resolution. So, there seems to be some hiatus between what the leaders here think and what their junior partners there think. You may better check up with them. I have an authority that there is a resolution. A resolution has been passed with the signatures of the leaders' of all the parties, not just Mr. Saikia himself. So, I would like to place that before the House and that would explain all these things.

A MEMBER : What is there in the resolution?

PRIME MINISTER : There is an appeal to both sides in this resolution, asking the ULFA to respond to the steps taken by the Government and release of TADA detenues. The signatories include representatives from all the national political parties including those at the national level appear to be critical of the offer of release. This is what I said. So, it is all right, I mean if the local units think in a particular way we should respect the views of the local units because they know where the shoe pinches. So, let them do it. They are doing in a joint manner. I think the Chief Minister is taking others into confidence evidently and they have come out with this joint statement. So, let us wait and let us not pronounce anything just now.

Sir, about the industrial reforms, I said they are still in the offing. In the next two or three days we will come out with them. But as always happens, three or four newspapers have come out with versions which do not tally entirely with each other and any intelligent guess is possible to bring all those things that have appeared in the papers. So, let us not go by what has been contained in the newspaper. What I would say is that we are deregulating the economy, but at our own pace. We welcome foreign investment, but on our terms and in areas we deem important and critical. This is the cardinal principle subject to which we are doing this. If we consider that in an area no industrialisation is necessary or if it is injurious from the point of view of a developing country—and we can conceive of many such situations where it may not be injurious from their point of view in their countries, but it is certainly injurious from our point of view in our country—the Government

reserves the right to stop that kind of industry from coming here. It is not as though we have opened up to an extent where everybody is welcome to come and do everything here. It is not possible. So, bulk of our controls, we have found have hampered the economic activities in the past. This has been the experience. Time has come according to the Government and according to everyone because this change is sweeping the whole world. I do not want to say anything about Comrade Gorbachov and what is happening in other countries. All this has been said already. People are more knowledgeable than myself on what is happening in the Soviet Union. That has been spoken. So, I do not have to repeat all that we cannot keep out of this change, this complete global sweeping change that is coming. Maybe in the manner in which we manage the change in this country, we may be committing mistakes. I am not quite sure that others are not committing mistakes. But I do not want to commit. So, let us find out. You are authorities on this. I am prepared to sit with you and discuss what we did, what we should do and what needs to be done. BJP friends also can tell us what needs not to be done. Let us come to an understanding of what should be done in pursuance of this great change which you cannot ignore and if we ignore, we do it at our peril. We will be simply isolated in the world and we do not want this isolation to come to India. That is why, there is so much of area in which we could come to an agreement, to an understanding and I can assure you that I will keep my mind open. The Government mind will be absolutely open to new ideas, new innovative ideas that may be coming from any quarter. This is the spirit in which we are approaching the problems of the country.

I need not reply to all the points that have been raised, some of them are relevant but you know in such a long debate, some irrelevant things also slip in. Nothing can be done about them. You will pardon me if I do not really follow those honourable Members, I do not chase them into those fields which I consider irrelevant.

Thank you very much. I commend this Motion for the acceptance of the House.

Let Us March Ahead Hand in Hand

I OFFER MY hearty greetings to you on the auspicious occasion of the forty-fourth anniversary of the Independence Day of our country. It is a tribute to democracy that an ordinary worker like me, born in a small village, is able to address you from the ramparts of this historic Red Fort. It is due to your blessings and my good fortune.

You are aware that numerous people made sacrifices for this freedom and nurtured it with their blood. The great chariot of democracy has been moving forward steadily and shall keep going ahead.

During the last 44 years, elections were held for the Lok Sabha ten times. The Tenth General Elections were held only recently. During these elections, your anger as well as your appreciation have found expression. We have accepted with humility the mandate given by you. We belong to you, we are from amongst you and will continue to be a part of you. These are our credentials, and we do not need any other identity.

The elections for Tenth Lok Sabha were held in the shadow of a tragedy. Rajiv Gandhi's brutal assassination had stunned the country. The sudden disappearance of a young man, who was perceived to have solved the problem of leadership of our country for the next 20 to 25 years, plunged us all into darkness. But what can be done? We know that everyone who is born is destined to die one day. If death occurs after a full life, we accept it, but an untimely death causes distress. We will implement the agenda that Rajivji had prepared for the future of the country. And I stand before you with the resolve to follow the path shown by him.

I want to apprise you of the critical phase that the country is passing through today. This Government has completed 55 days in office. During this period we have taken certain decisions and avoided certain pitfalls. The people gave us the mandate to form the Government but it was short of the necessary majority. We accepted the mandate of the people and formed the Government. We will not spare any effort to ensure that the country marches ahead towards progress. The co-operation extended to us by other

political parties has made the situation optimistic. It is my firm belief that there is no reason to entertain any doubt about the stability of this Government.

Very briefly I want to place before you the situation inherited by this Government. We inherited a situation which was vitiated by fundamentalism, hatred among castes and social unrest.

The economy was in the grip of a serious crisis that was unprecedented in the history of free India. Our financial credibility had touched the nadir. In a week or two, we would have been unable to repay our loans. I assumed the office in such a situation. Many of the problems were there for a long time, but during the last two years they grew in their complexity. This was part of our legacy. Things appeared to go out of hand. There was no scope for delay, and procrastination would have been suicidal. Therefore, we had to undertake certain prompt measures. We took bold decisions. We have been able to arrest the deterioration which was creeping in. A lot more has got to be done, but certainly we have arrested the situation from deteriorating further.

You are all aware that we produce so many things in the country for our requirements. But there are some items that we still have to import. There are some commodities which we produce, but the quality we produce is not enough to meet our needs. Therefore, we have to import commodities like kerosene oil, diesel, edible oil, fertilizers, etc. To import these we need foreign exchange as the Rupee is not convertible abroad. Our foreign exchange reserves have been woefully depleted. Even today we are not in a comfortable position and therefore we will have to boost our exports. The goods that we produce will be exported and we will get foreign exchange in return. Therefore, first of all, we have done away with the system of licences, permits etc. as this complex system created many obstacles for the people. Now we have broken this vicious circle, and liberated those who were stuck in it.

We have paved the way for increasing our exports by slightly changing the exchange rate of the Rupee. We trust that in the coming days our exports would get a boost and we would be able to earn enough foreign exchange. We have presented our new budget in which we have formulated a number of schemes for public welfare, especially keeping in view the needs of our rural population.

I want to give a brief account of some of these programmes. We have done a lot but I would like to discuss a few of them as there is not enough time for a detailed presentation. As you know, we have prepared an extensive programme in the memory of Rajivji



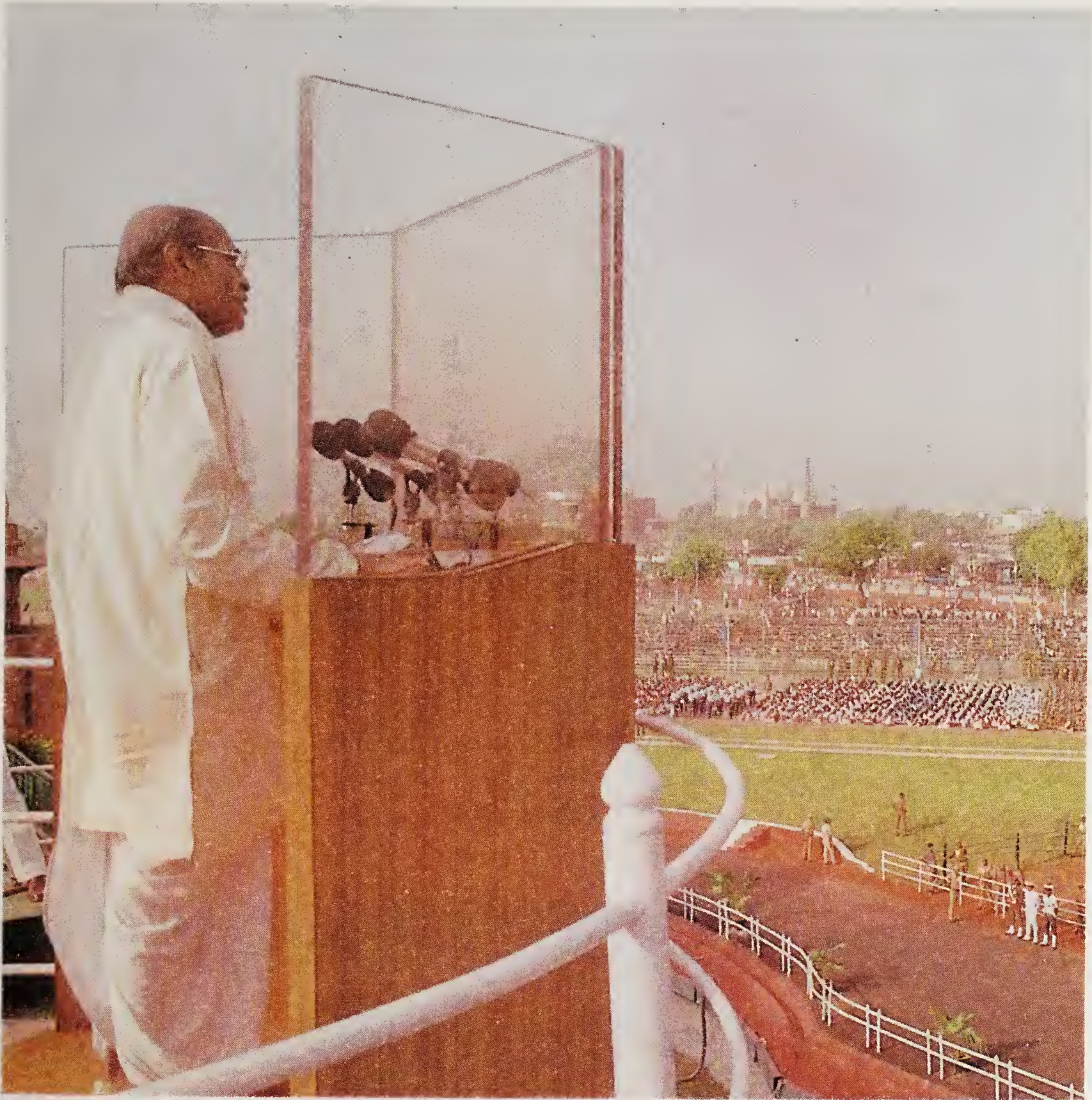
Taking the oath of office, 20 June 1991



With the Council of Ministers, 20 June 1991



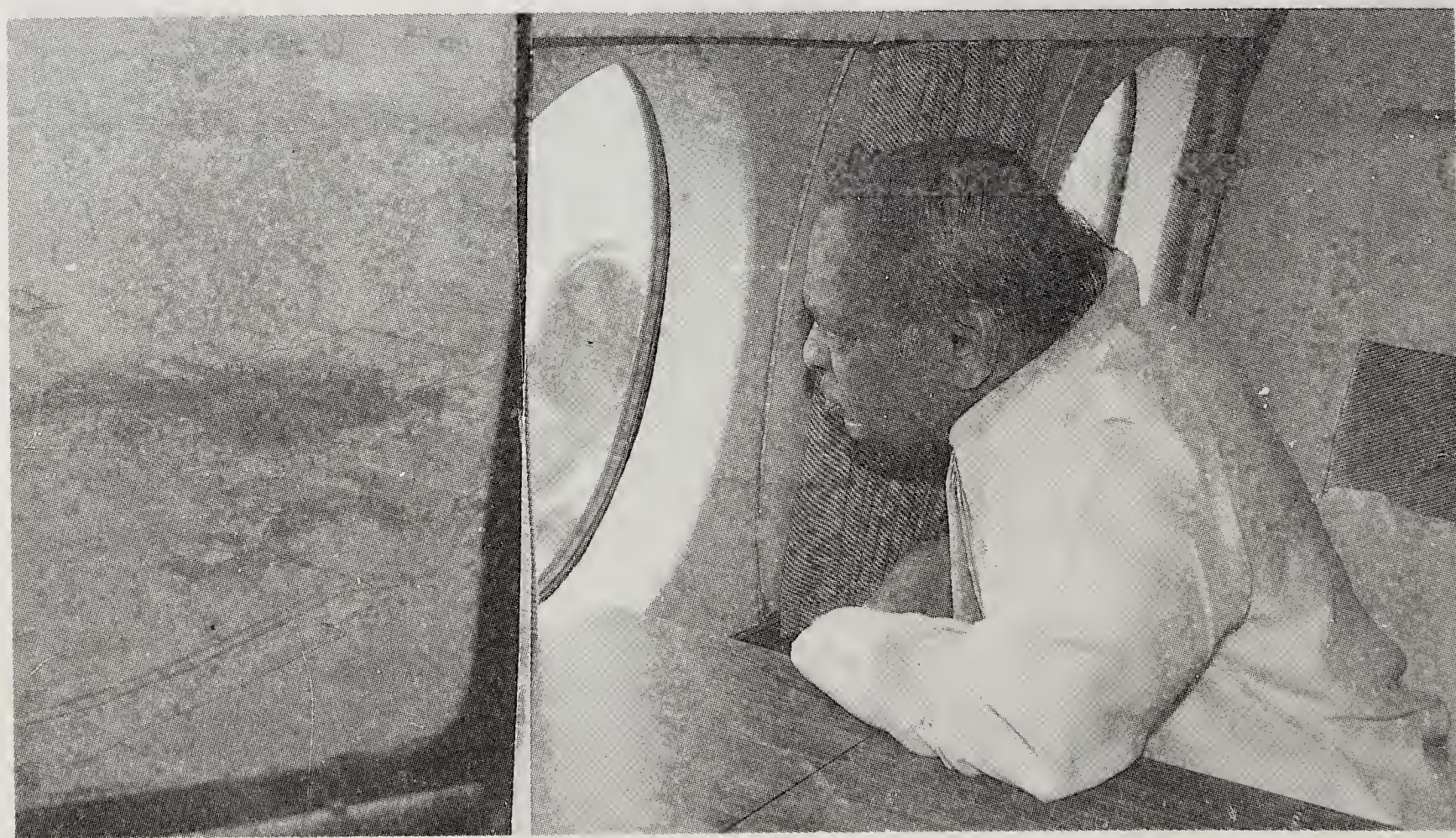
*With a delegation of Sikhs of Ludhiana, New Delhi,
12 August 1991*



*Addressing the nation from the ramparts of Red Fort on
Independence Day, 15 August 1991*



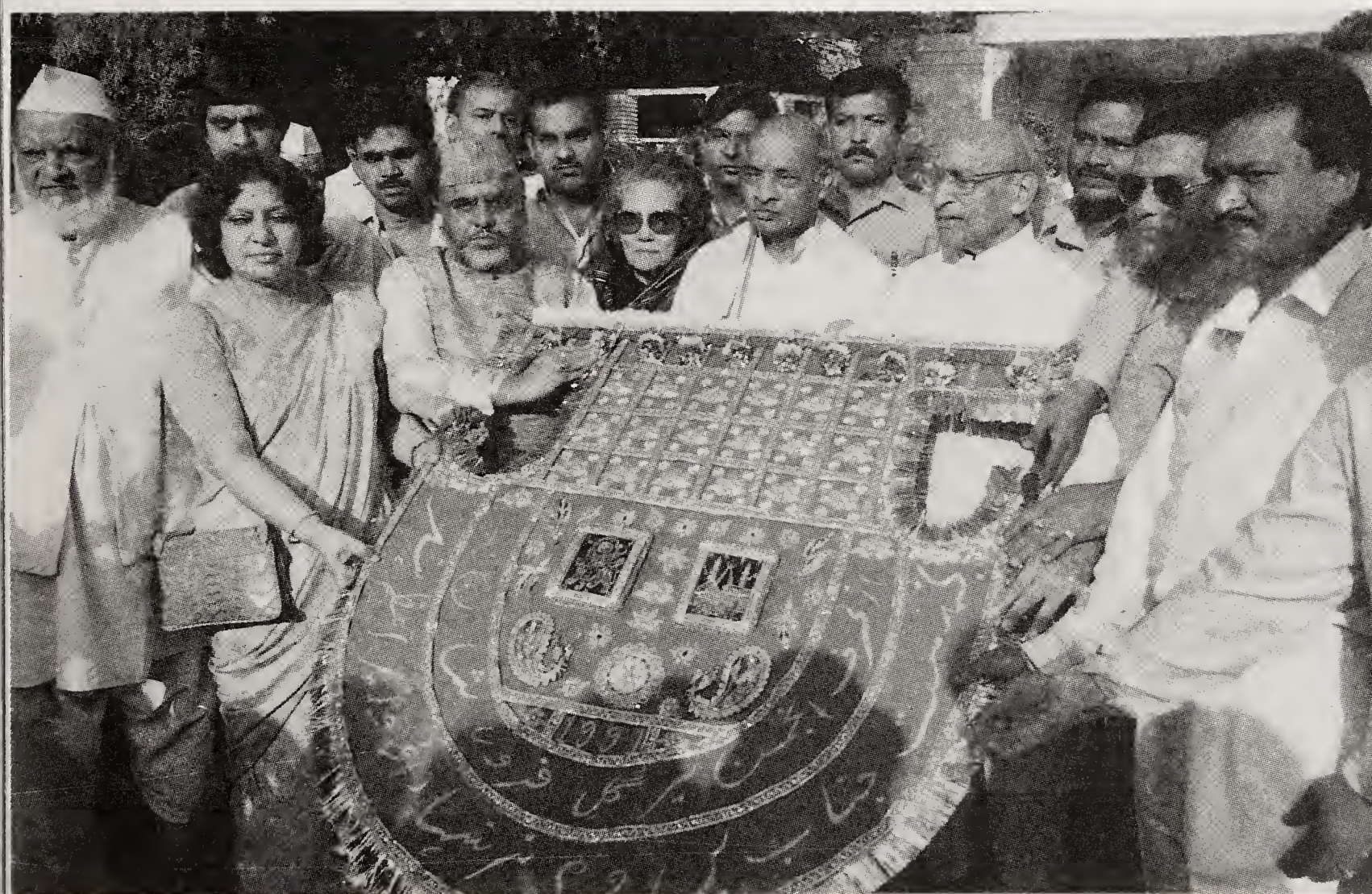
Lighting a lamp to mark 'Sadbhavana Diwas', the birth anniversary of the late Shri Rajiv Gandhi, New Delhi, 20 August 1991



Aerial survey of flood-affected areas of Orissa, 21 August 1991



*Releasing 'Rajiv Gandhi : Selected Speeches and Writings', and
'Selected Thoughts', New Delhi, 22 August 1991*



*Inaugurating 'Phool Walon Ki Sair', New Delhi,
30 September 1991*



*Paying homage to Mahatma Gandhi at Raj Ghat,
2 October 1991*



Addressing a public meeting in Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat, after unveiling the statue of Mahatma Gandhi, 2 October 1991



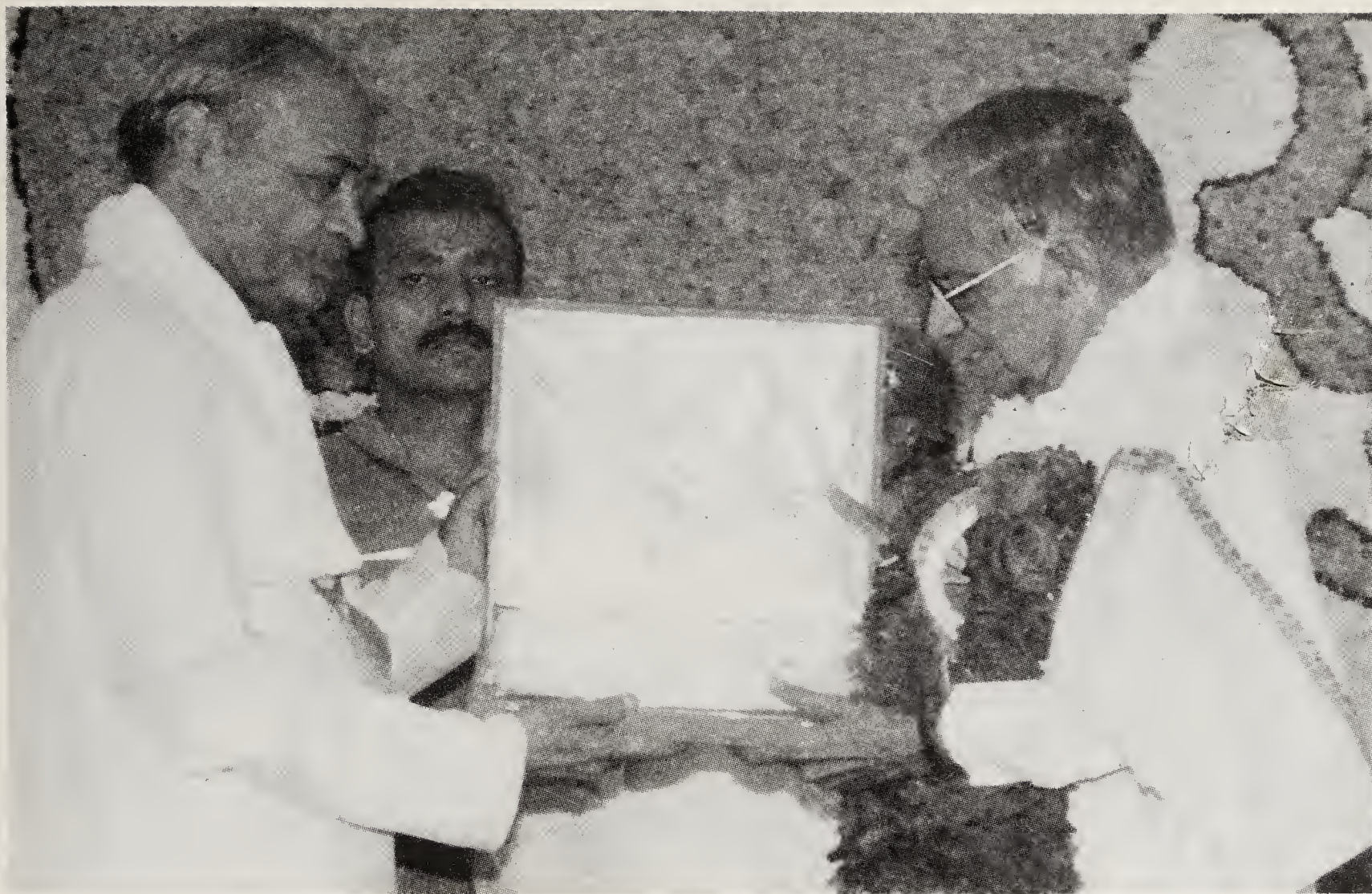
With Mother Teresa, New Delhi, 4 October 1991



*Going round the earthquake affected areas of Uttarkashi,
23 October 1991*



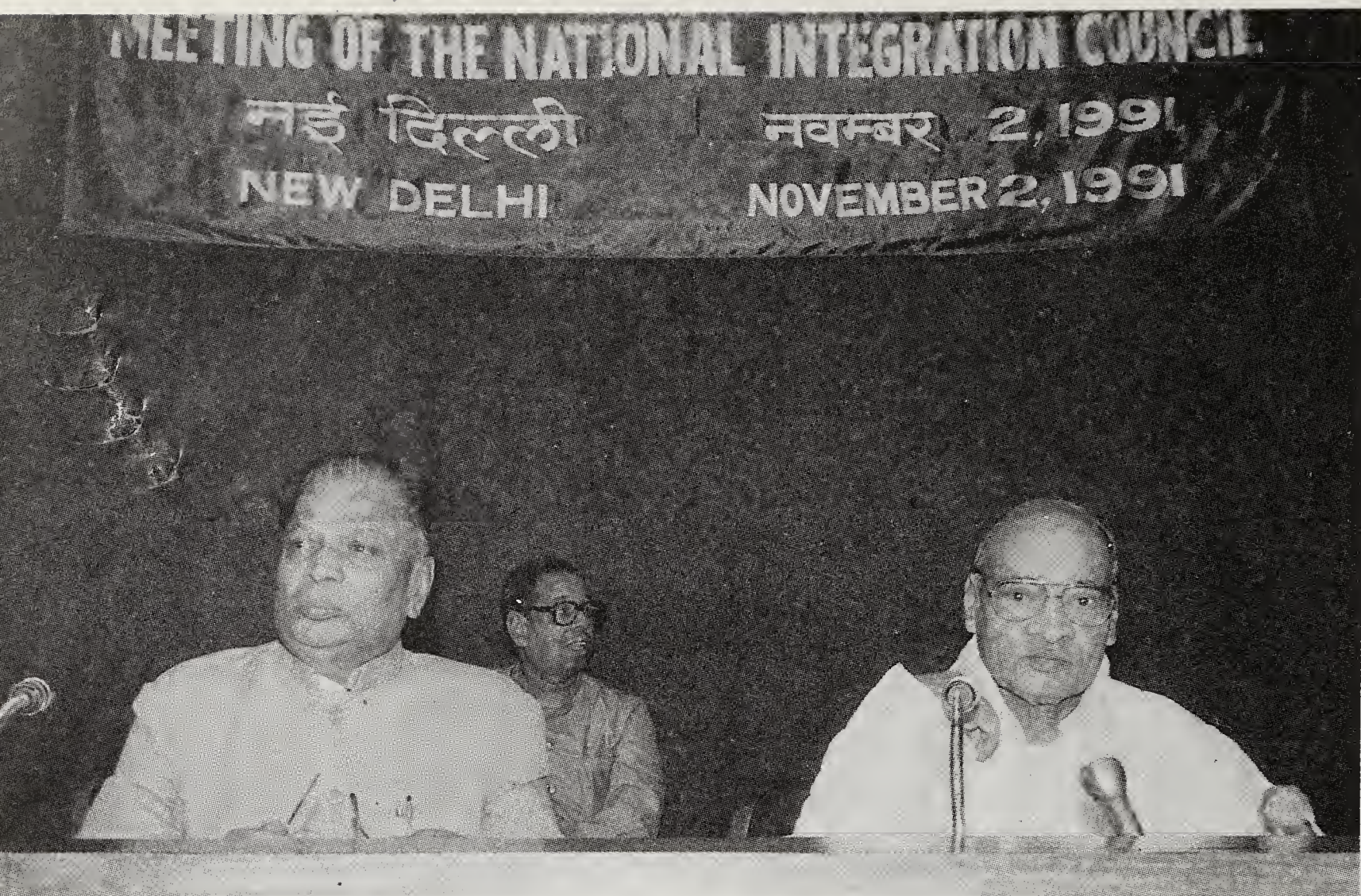
Homage to Shri Rajiv Gandhi at Sriperumbudur, 25 October 1991



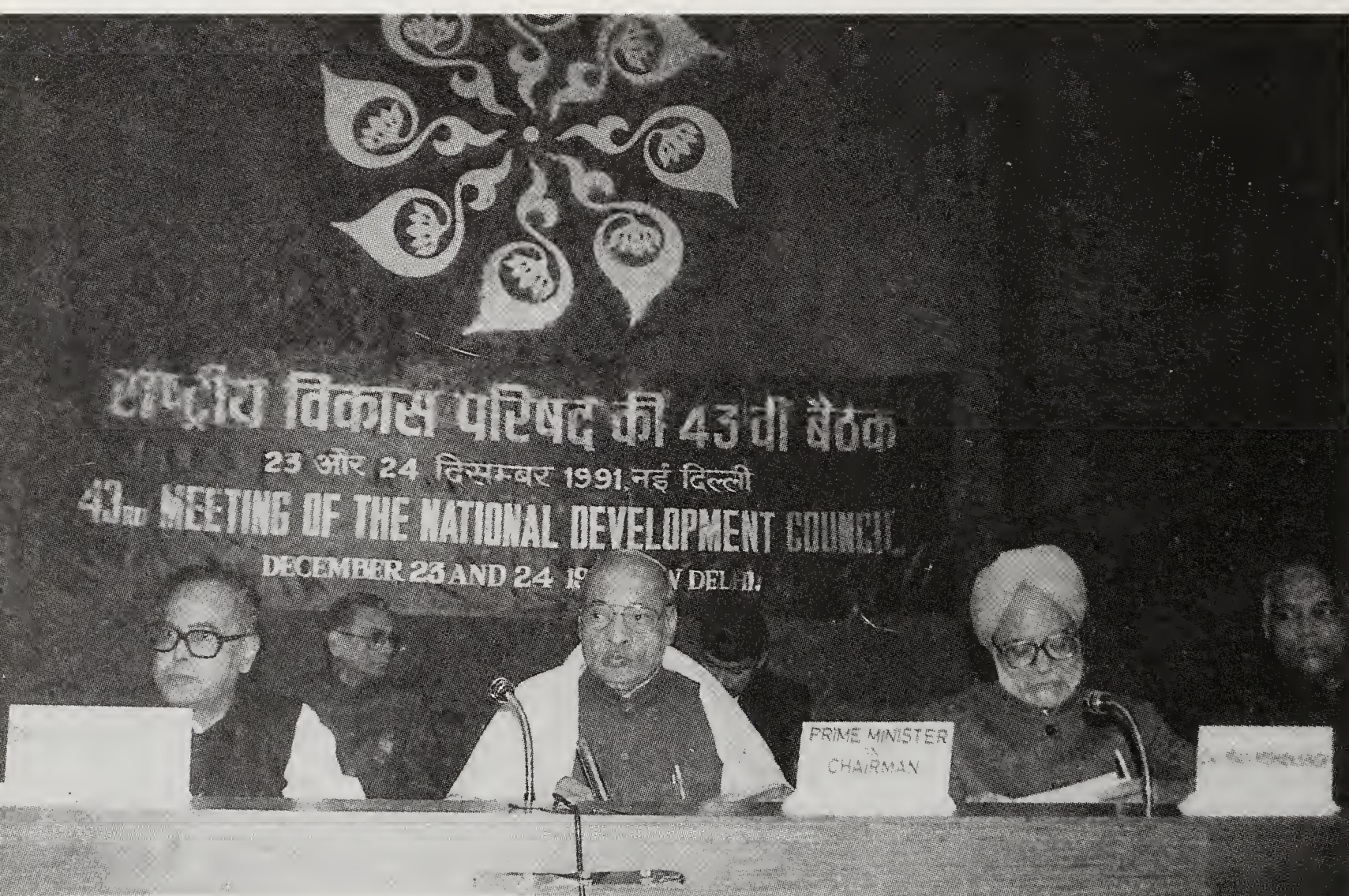
Inaugurating the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of 1942 Quit India Movement, Bombay, 1 November 1991



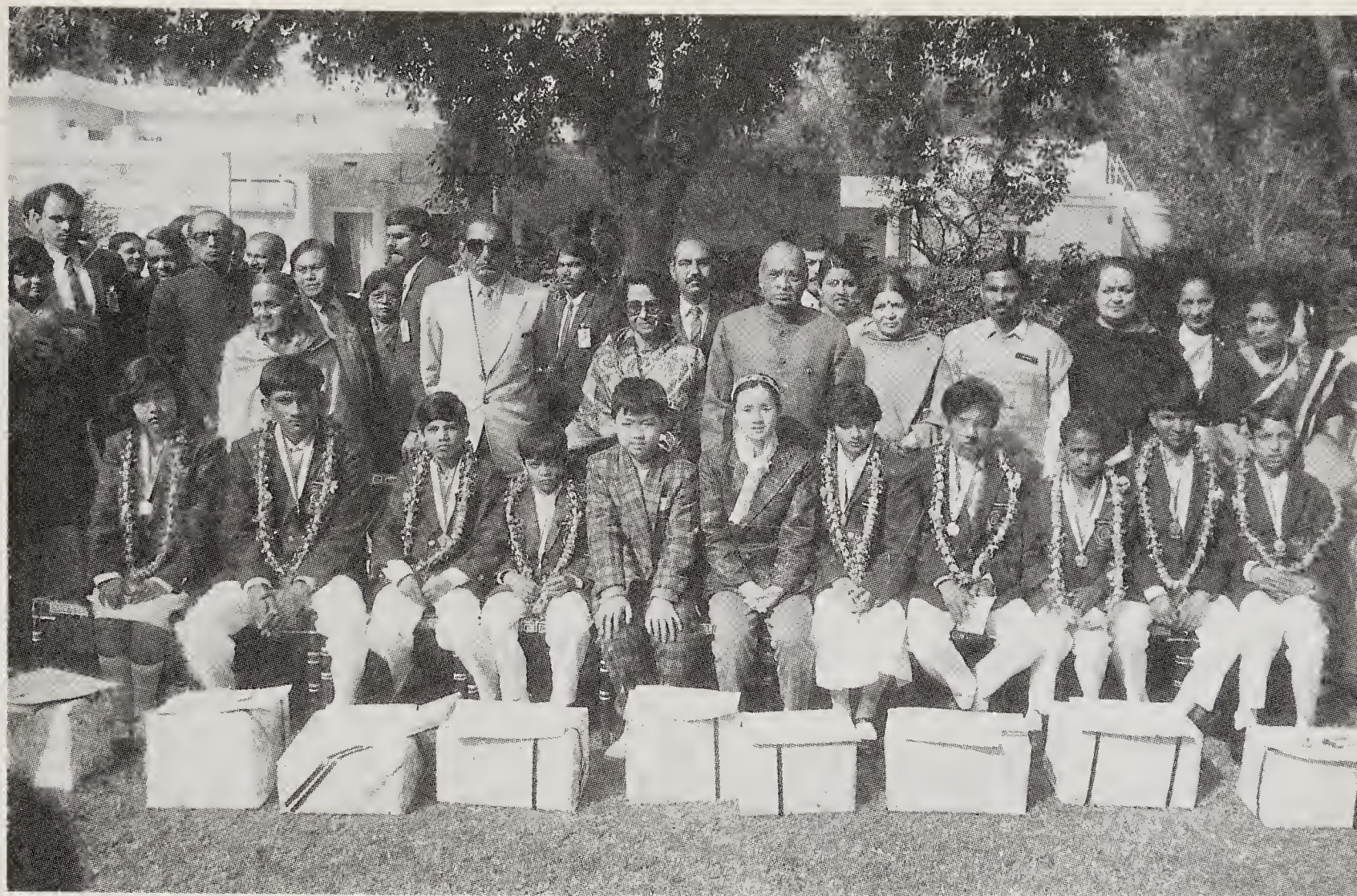
Honouring Prof. V. K. Gokak with Jnanpith Award for 1990, Bombay, 1 November 1991



*Inaugurating National Integration Council Meeting,
New Delhi, 2 November 1991*



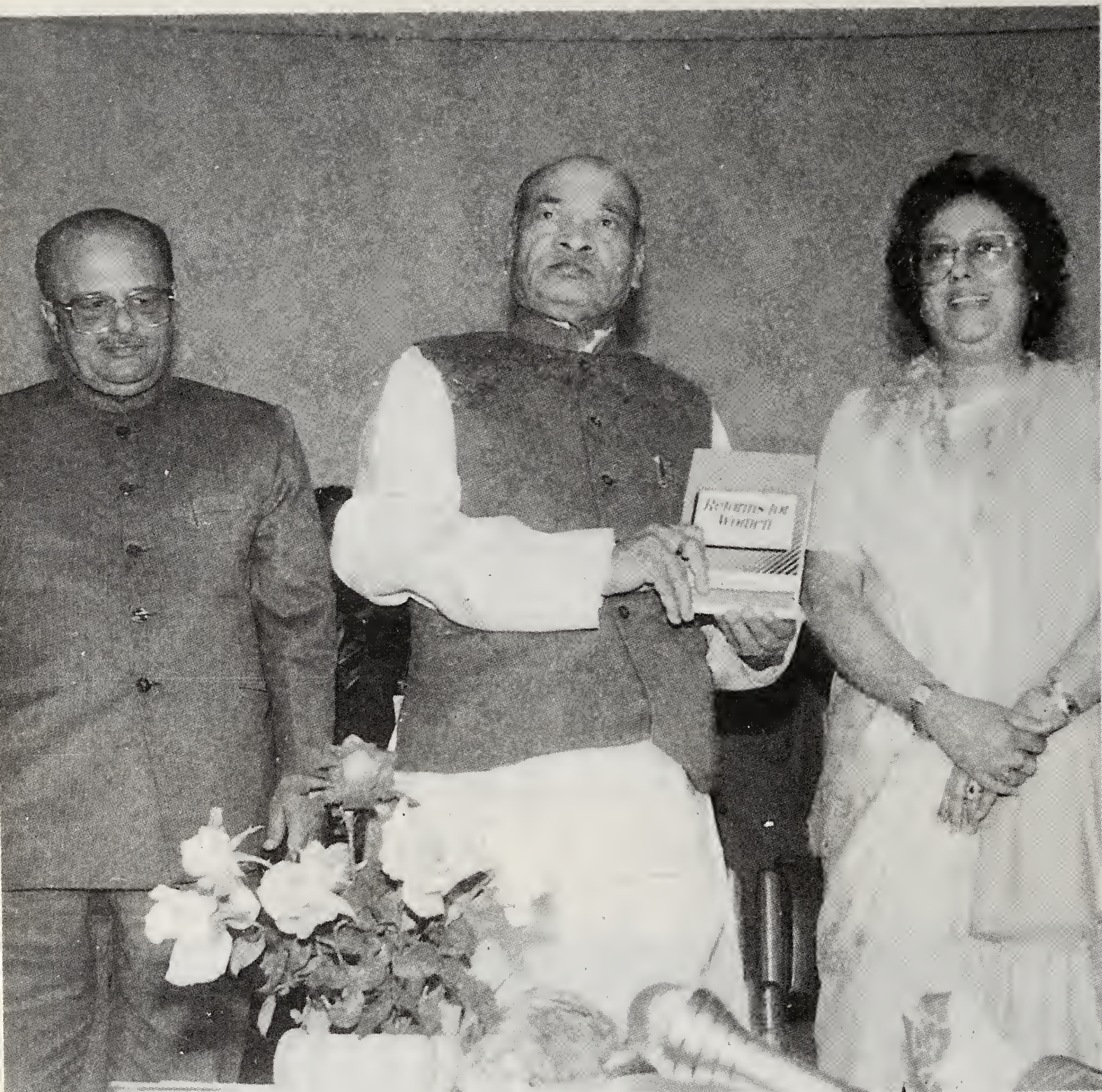
*Inaugurating National Development Council Meeting,
New Delhi, 23 December 1991*



*With the recipients of National Awards for Gallantry 1991,
New Delhi, 24 January 1992*



*Inaugurating Diguvarange Haramshara at Minicoy, Lakshadweep,
9 February 1992*



*Releasing the book 'Reforms for Women' by
Mrs. Najma Heptullah, Delhi, 6 March 1992*



With neo-literate tribals at Santiniketan, 21 March 1992

CONFERENCE ON ECONOMIC CRITERIA FOR POORER SOCIALLY
ALLY BACKWARD CLASSES AND ECONOMICALLY BACKWARD SECTIONS
10 APRIL 1992



*Inaugurating Chief Ministers' Conference on 'Economic Criteria
for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes',
New Delhi, 10 April 1992*



*Paying floral tributes at the statue of Baba Saheb
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on his hundredth birth anniversary,
New Delhi, 14 April 1992*



At the meeting of Planning Commission, New Delhi, 8 May 1992



*Being greeted by the President Shri R. Venkataraman on his
seventy-second birthday, New Delhi, 28 June 1992*

which aims at providing drinking water to every village in the country. You know that drinking water has been provided to a number of villages during the last forty years. Yet there are a few far-flung villages where there is a scarcity of drinking water. Therefore we are taking up 80, 000 such villages in which drinking water will be made available under the programme named after Rajivji.

We have to improve the lot of our backward classes. To help them we are setting up a corporation.

We know that occasionally communal riots occur in our country. In these riots many people get killed, some become crippled and many children are rendered orphans with none to look after them. For these children we have set up a National Fund. This fund would be utilised to educate and bring up such children so that they get all opportunities to grow as worthy citizens of this country.

In our country, at times, the workers lose their jobs. Once they become jobless, none cares for them. We have formulated a plan to help them and rehabilitate them in alternative vocations by giving them training so that they do not become unemployed.

You know that our villages have got gifted craftsmen. They are second to none in their skills but their tools are outmoded. There are nearly 5.5 lakh villages in this country. Now, you can imagine how many craftsmen are there in every village working with outmoded tools. We have prepared a scheme to provide modern tools for all such craftsmen so that they do not migrate from villages to cities. By using better tools they can earn much more in the villages. Such migration creates problems in the cities. Therefore, once better tools are made available to them the craftsmen will have no compulsion to rush to cities and they can enhance their income by remaining in the villages.

The most important thing is our Public Distribution System under which we have fair price shops, which are now largely concentrated in cities. The Public Distribution System has not yet reached the villages. We have decided to take up 1500 blocks in far-flung tribal, desert and very backward areas to provide at least one fair price shop in each village. In these shops people can get the commodities of their daily consumption at a reasonable rate. This would be a big boon for the people living in our villages.

You must also be aware that there are frequent land disputes and often they assume such violent proportions that the real issues are pushed into the background. And a lot of litigation continues for years, ruining the people. The source of these conflicts are the

land records which are not kept properly. The only method to avoid this is to keep our land records in the villages properly so that people know about their ownership and proprietary rights. We want to launch this campaign throughout the country so that in every village proper land records are made available.

Rajivji had given us Indira Mahila Yojana but during the last two years, there has been no implementation of this scheme. We will revive and implement it. You know that the Panchayati Raj Bill was not allowed to take the shape of law. We will now have it passed and implement it.

I want to impress upon our non-resident Indian brothers that we want to welcome them here. We want to offer them many facilities here. We are ready to offer whatever facilities they require for making investments and set up industries. We want to strengthen the age-old bonds. We are proud of them. Lakhs of Indians have gone abroad. They have become prosperous. Even today they are determined to serve their country. Once again I extend to them a very cordial welcome.

Now I want to speak to you about certain burning problems before the country. As I mentioned earlier, the feeling of hatred is rampant. There is a spate of violence. We have to change this in this country, which is the abode of non-violence. There is no place for violence here. India, which believes in world peace, will have no right to talk about it, unless there is peace in the country.

There are then the problems of Punjab and Kashmir. In these states violence, separatism and terrorism are prevalent. I want to make it clear that none is going to gain out of terrorism. The only result is bloodshed and loss of lives. Those who are indulging in such activities will never be able to achieve their aims. We should return to the path of peace and I appeal to them that they should co-operate with us in evolving a solution to the problems of this country, problems of Punjab and problems of Kashmir. Together we can find the solutions. There is no problem which is insurmountable.

We surely want elections in Punjab, but we would not tolerate the use of elections to promote separatism. We will ensure that elections are held within the parameters of the Constitution.

About Kashmir, I want to assert we are confident of facing the situation there. We will contain terrorism. As far as Kashmir is concerned there is the Shimla Agreement between India and Pakistan, and we will try to resolve the problems according to that agreement. This has been our endeavour so far and the same holds good for the future. We do not require any mediation. We are neighbouring countries and we will solve our problems between

ourselves. All the problems can be solved, if there is understanding on the other side and if the activities of abetting and aiding violence are stopped from that side.

During the last two or three years a strange dispute has cropped up over the mosque and the temple. The foundation of our country is secularism. It is neither anti-religion nor fanning communalism in the name of religion. We wish to remain secular. Religion is a personal affair. The Government, its policies and programmes have got nothing to do whether someone visits the temple or someone else goes to the mosque. We are not going to give up secularism. We may need the help of others for running the Government, but we cannot take this country ahead if we give up the basic principles. This country will disintegrate the day we give up secularism. Therefore, we must stick to it. Religion binds people. It generates spiritual thinking and improves our material and spiritual well being. The use of religion in politics to secure votes in elections is certainly not desirable. I hope people will understand this and will not allow such designs to succeed.

By secularism we also believe that minorities should be given full protection and therefore we are going to give legal status to the Minorities Commission. There is no danger to any religion here. I must say that the slogans about this or that religion being in danger are absolutely bogus. In this country there has never been any threat to any religion nor will there ever be. We want to guarantee this. It is the firm resolve of this Government that there should be no threat to any religion; and if a threat was ever there, we would eliminate it. This danger will never be there. We have to guard against such slogans.

We then have the issue of Mandal Commission which relates to our people belonging to the backward castes and backward classes. We certainly want social justice. We have undertaken several programmes to achieve this. In many States these programmes are continuing but we do not want social disintegration to attain social justice. We do not want the achievement of social justice by violence or by creating mutual confrontation. This cannot happen. It would lead to many other afflictions. We have faith that we can solve this problem peacefully and by consensus. I have discussed this with many people. I feel that on this issue, there is consensus to a large extent. Though the process is not yet complete, a broad consensus can be arrived at. I wish that this issue be resolved on the basis of a national consensus. Our efforts in this direction will continue.

Our farmers give us food and for them an extensive programme is before us. The farmers produce foodgrains but the production of

several commodities will have to be stepped up so that we can export them to earn foreign exchange. I invite our farmers who have provided food for us to come forward now to produce for export and make this country prosperous.

I would like to tell our armed forces that the Government is always alive to their interests and their welfare and there are several schemes before us. For want of time I cannot outline them but I want to assure them that we are preparing many schemes for them and we shall always be ready to look after their interests.

Friends, today the main problem before the country is economic. We have to increase our production as well as the wealth of this country. If wealth does not increase there will be nothing to distribute and it is not prudent to distribute poverty. Therefore, the need of the hour is that we should add to our wealth and ensure its just distribution. For this we have formulated a programme and the Government is keeping both these aspects in view. We have to generate employment and for increasing employment opportunities industrialisation is needed. The industry cannot remain outdated. A new environment has got to be created. We are engaged in this. If the capacity of industry does not develop, it will lag behind and we shall not be able to compete in the world market. Therefore, the capacity of the industry has got to be developed.

Besides tackling the economic issue, we must also ensure that there is no disintegration. Social unrest should not be there and people should not waste their energy and time fighting each other. I want to impress upon you that this has got to be stopped at any cost. Social unity and national unity are not separate from each other. Both are two sides of the same coin and therefore we have to take care of them.

I think that it is our foremost duty to uphold national unity, social unity and maintain social equilibrium so that there is no setback to social harmony. To achieve this we will continue to make all out efforts and, as I have said, this is the duty of all of us and we should perform this sincerely.

There are many things that I wanted to discuss with you but there is not enough time. But I will keep in touch with you and inform you about the various programmes and the steps that we propose to take from time to time. Today I would only like to say that the country is at a very precarious juncture and there are many dangers, both internal and external, looming large on the horizon. To face them we need unity. Once again I offer my greetings to you on this auspicious occasion. I offer my best wishes for a very happy year of India's Independence to all of you. May this country scale new heights of progress in the coming year. I am grateful to

all of you for giving me a patient hearing and I hope that you will fulfil your duties and will help the Government in performing its duties. You and me are not separate. We have to work together. Let us march ahead hand in hand.

Promoting Goodwill

TODAY WE ARE celebrating the birth anniversary of our great leader, Shri Rajiv Gandhi. On one hand our eyes long to see him and on the other, our duty calls and tells us that no matter how many difficulties we have to face, we must follow the path shown by him. It is a difficult path and it will not be an easy task to follow it, but we, in this country, have developed the habit of treading difficult paths over thousands of years. Our leaders and saints had shown us the very same path and this country has been following it. Our feet might have trembled in the past and may do so in the future, but we always tend to get back on the right path. We have never lost the track completely and this is the reason why our country, our civilisation is still alive while other civilisations have crumbled.

We have decided to celebrate the birth anniversary of Rajivji as a day of goodwill and friendship “Sadbhavana Divas”. Many people suggested many names; Rajiv Gandhi was multi-faceted personality and I felt that if we pick up any one facet of his personality and base our celebrations on that, it would not do justice to his personality as a whole. So we drew such a picture of Rajiv Gandhi that it gave us the essence of his life and personality. He undertook a goodwill journey at a time, when it was most needed, at a time when a conflict was brewing between various sects and religions in the country. He tried to calm down this conflict as far as possible. I would like to tell you that India has undertaken the task of spreading goodwill for thousands of years, and it has always sown the seeds of friendship. If India has role to play in the world today it is that of spreading the word of goodwill. We bear no ill-will against anybody and extend a friendly hand to all, but we will certainly give a fitting reply to anyone who tries to attack us.

Free rendering of the speech in Hindi on the occasion of the birth anniversary of the late Shri Rajiv Gandhi, New Delhi, 20 August 1991

Barring those incidents which are a threat to the security of our country, we are always ready to nurture friendship because goodwill and friendship are two sides of the same coin. Goodwill boosts friendship and friendship boosts goodwill. This is why we thought of celebrating this day as a day of promoting goodwill and friendship, so that we could have a complete and suitable picture of our great leader before us. During the past two to three years we have lost our goodwill to some extent and vices such as hate and jealousy are gaining strength. We have to eradicate these feelings at any cost.

Goodwill is diminishing the world over and whenever this has happened, it sparked off a world war. I would like to tell you that we are doing a right thing by celebrating this day as a day for spreading goodwill and I feel that it is a good way to remember our departed leader. Shri Arjun Singh has just now made us take oath to promote goodwill. Each and every word of it was full of meaning and it is not easy to live up to the expectations of this oath. It is not merely a matter of words but that of carrying out a pledge for which each and every person has to make inherent changes in his behaviour and character. We will have to maintain goodwill at any cost and we will bear all the hardships that come in our way.

In this context, I would like to tell you, that as suggested by Shri Arjun Singh, we will hold some competition at about this time every year and it will carry an award. This is a very good programme and it will be implemented by the Human Resource Development Minister. I would like to add that Rajivji had an active interest in sports and also in the field of art, and that this should also be included in the proposed programme. We would like to honour our sportspersons and artists who have earned fame and name in their respective fields. This will make our programme complete and composite. Today Rajivji is not physically present before us, but emotionally and spiritually we feel his presence and the path shown by him.

Rajiv Gandhi : His Speeches and Thoughts

I AM GLAD to be associated with this function. I have some personal attachment to this book and its contents because of the ideas evolved over the years. These ideas were Rajivji's own but he did not just adumbrate them as if he was saying something final. He was always in the habit of discussing. Sometimes he would call a few friends just for a chat. Those who were invited did not know what he was driving at, why they were called. He wanted to know their spontaneous view, spontaneous reactions to something which he had said. And, he would put it quite provocatively while starting the dialogue. Later on, we came to know that this was a process which he was developing within himself—of digesting ideas from all quarters, from friends, from experts; I am sure he was having these meetings with different groups of people, different sections of people in small groups and he was constantly evolving these ideas after consultations. That is why you find an amount of maturity in these ideas which is hardly matched anywhere else.

His ideas on education, for instance, culture, Panchayati Raj,—on these we had many many brain-storming sittings. He had sittings with several other people, those who had different ideas for instance. And, he tried to assimilate these ideas from wherever they came. Right from the Vedas, the tradition in this country is to welcome ideas from wherever they come. We always welcome them, we try to assimilate them. If there is something which needs to be rejected, we don't hesitate to reject them, but whatever is assimilable we certainly assimilate them and make them our own. So, the Indian culture has come to contain so many ideas which may have come from outside, which may have evolved within the country on the basis of the amalgam that got created over the centuries.

On cultural matters, Rajivji was very forthright. I have seen very few people who were so closely and completely attached to the distinctive feature of Indian culture. In fact, he used to talk about this topic many times and quite at length. I wonder how he got the time to do all that, but he did find the time and we found the discussions very very useful.

Speech while releasing the books "Rajiv Gandhi : Selected Speeches and Writings Volume V" and "Selected Thoughts : Rajiv Gandhi" published by Publications Division, New Delhi, 22 August 1991

This book is a collection of permanent value. This could, perhaps, be a representative collection of all that a Prime Minister with his multifarious activities and distractions could still put together as something to be passed on to posterity, as something to be presented on behalf of India to the whole world.

Rajiv Gandhi had a very clear idea on some of the most momentous topics of the day. It is hardly realised that he started a new path in international thinking, in international living, in international ideology—ideology of existence. He adumbrated for the first time along with President Gorbachov the idea of a non-violent world. For the first time I am saying because after Mahatma Gandhi, the idea had somehow got lost in the sands of time, in the sands of modern life, and probably no one or very few who are in active politics, who are heads of state, heads of government, had taken it seriously thereafter. For the first time in 1986, what I call the most momentous, most important chapter in modern history of the world where non-violence was accepted as an important, perhaps an inevitable, ingredient of the whole outlook on life. This was adumbrated, for the first time and I think this will have to be the springboard for many international ideals to be spelt out hereafter—the disarmament process, the basis of coexistence, the natural corollaries of that one idea that we do not want violence in this world. Nuclear free, everyone says, but that component of non-violence was brought for the first time and from that emanate all the other ideas which we all know. But it is hardly realised how epoch-making that one Delhi Declaration was.

Thus Rajiv Gandhi has given us something which India can be proud of, which the coming generations have to work on, which we in our own humble way have to elaborate, imbibe, understand and maybe present it to others. If it is accepted, particularly at the level of the younger generations whose comprehension needs to be properly oriented to the idea of non-violence, we see that this is becoming more and more compelling. It is becoming compelling but we are not really feeling the impact of it as we ought to.

So, I would say that if there is one thing which India can work on assiduously without looking back and that is the idea of a non-violent world from which we have been drawing inspiration. I am confident that it will be possible for us to do so in our own way. You cannot possibly make such epoch-making statements everyday. We do not have to repeat it everyday or match it everyday with other statements. What is needed is how to work on it. And, that is what, I think, should be our endeavour hereafter.

He has expressed his ideas on almost every important aspect of human life. I am sure these volumes will become a body of guidance, a body of thinking, which will inspire all of us and the younger generations.

I congratulate the I&B Ministry for having brought out this publication. I only wish that we improve on the quality of the publication so that we could make presentation volumes of this and I am sure this will be a regular feature which we can make in the Government of India and it will adorn the libraries of the greatest men and women in the world hereafter.

Revitalising Public Distribution System

I AM DELIGHTED to be in the midst of you all in this Council where an important topic like the Public Distribution System is being deliberated upon. I am specially happy that the Governors of Punjab and J & K, Administrators of Union Territories and the Chief Ministers have spared their valuable time to come to this meeting.

The Public Distribution System has played an important role over the last four decades in providing some succour to the common man and in bringing about a sobering effect on the price fluctuations. It has proved to be of special help in times of drought and other natural calamities, when State Governments and Union Territory Administrations have risen to the occasion to provide essential commodities through the Public Distribution System to those in distress. There are, however, some aspects of the PDS which are not satisfactory.

Accessibility and availability are two very important aspects for an effective PDS. It has very often been observed that the PDS commodities do not effectively reach the remotest corners of our country, where poor reside in larger numbers. Some sections of the population in urban areas, like those living in unorganised

housing areas and construction work labourers, also need to be catered to in a better way.

It is fortunate that due to our achievements on the food front and a few successive years of good monsoon, we have had good foodgrain production. Our position in respect of the stock of foodgrain is indeed happy. Sugar production has also reached record levels. You are well aware of the economic situation of the country, as also of the important decisions and steps we had taken to overcome our difficulties. The Government of India have tried to meet the demands for wheat and rice made by the State Government to a large extent. However, you will agree that it is necessary to keep buffer stocks for basic food security. We also have severe constraints in providing items like imported edible oil, and increasing allocations of kerosene. It is in view of this that there is need for better management of the distribution system, so that scarce resources are utilised properly and essential items go to the most needy.

It is proposed that the Government, both at the Centre and the States, should give the greatest attention to the reach of PDS commodities to some identified areas. I am of the view that all the Blocks under the Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), Desert Development Programme (DDP) and the areas under Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDP) be selected for a special focus for a reoriented and more effective PDS. Apart from these, the hilly areas identified by the Planning Commission may also be chosen for special focus. In all these areas we should be able to show visible results in a year or a year and a half. New shops may be opened selectively wherever necessary and other area-specific strategies be devised to ensure the reach and availability of PDS commodities in such Blocks.

I would also urge you to take up the door delivery system in these areas. Door delivery system already exists in a few States. The system will not only ensure the reach but will also provide a safeguard against diversion of PDS foodgrains and other essential commodities by anti-social elements. The Ministry of Civil Supplies and Public Distribution has a scheme for providing financial assistance to State Government for purchase of mobile vans which can be modified to enable greater flow of finance from banks and financial institutions to this activity. A programme of much greater magnitude can thus be undertaken in the next 18 months or so. This is included as an agenda item and I trust you will deliberate upon it.

Apart from the geographical approach which is very important, it would also be necessary to revitalise the scheme of delivery of

PDS foodgrains through the rural employment programmes like the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY). The quantities of wheat and rice distributed through these programmes had reached an order of two million tonnes in certain years. They, however, dwindled to negligible proportions in the last financial year. This situation will need to be corrected and drastically reversed. Employment generation programmes provide an excellent method of self-selection of beneficiaries as only the poor and the most needy among the rural population come to work on project under such programmes. It is an effective system to ensure that apart from wages in cash, foodgrains reach the home of these rural poor. Some two million tonnes of foodgrains distributed through the scheme would make for an appreciable quantum, out of a total of 14-15 million tonnes distributed annually. This quantity would be automatically targeted to this deserving group of people. I would like to hear your comments as to why distribution under this programme has gone down so drastically. I am sure that the Government of India and the Government in the States and Union Territories would jointly overcome the difficulties in the system and revive and rejuvenate it.

The PDS shops, consumer co-operative stores and other similar outlets can also be used to provide to the consumers, particularly in these identified areas, additional essential items besides those normally distributed through the PDS. I understand that some States have already taken steps in this direction and are distributing items of mass consumption by using PDS outlets. I would suggest that all State and Union Territories start distribution of items like tea, soap, dhoti, saree, low-cost exercise books and other items keeping in view the local needs. The Government of India, through the Ministries of Commerce, Industry and Textiles would provide all possible help to the efforts of the State Governments in this direction.

I would like to solicit your views to a proposal for distribution of gram through PDS in the areas identified for special focus. I would request you to deliberate on the modalities of procurement and distribution and other relevant details of the proposal.

Apart from the action taken by the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations under the Essential Commodities Act and other legislations, effective vigilance can also be exercised through vigilance committees at various levels, specially at the village level. Some States have already formed such committees. It would be necessary to see that the committees are not only formed in each village, but more importantly, they function in an effective manner. Social pressures at the village level can, to a great extent, help in

preventing diversion of essential commodities. However, this is not to play down the continuing need for effective legal action against those who seek to thwart the efforts of the Government by hoarding, profiteering and other malpractices.

The Public Distribution System has always been an area of joint responsibility between the Central Government and the State Governments/U.T.Administrations. However, since implementation is done by the State Governments, no improvement in the PDS will be possible without the fullest commitment and unrelenting administrative follow-up by the State Governments and U.T.Administrations. I expect that in the next 12 to 18 months we shall be able to present to the country a Public Distribution System that is not only effective in the remotest of areas but is also seen and accepted to be such by the consumers who are meant to be its beneficiaries. I trust that the two-day long deliberations will enable us to have a frank exchange of views, strengthen joint action between the State and Central Government and enable us to come to a definite programme and strategy towards improving the PDS services for the country as a whole and for the remote hilly, tribal and desert areas, in particular.

I may add that for a long time we have been tinkering with this problem of supplies to the poor people. We remember the Public Distribution System only when there is a drought or a similar difficult situation. But this is not the right approach. You cannot put together a Public Distribution System, going down to the last village, when there is a drought and you forget about it after the drought is over and you have rains and better conditions. It will not be possible for us to have any system unless you have it on a permanent basis. In fact, the time to put together a PDS is when you are overflowing with everything, not when everything is scarce. When there is scarcity you will never be able to reach anything, you will be working on an emergency basis and an emergency basis doesn't give you the best of conditions for organising a permanent system.

That is why we thought that at least now we start working on a permanent system. I am not expecting a perfect system to emerge in one year. I am only expecting a determined effort on the part of the Central Government and the State Governments and U.T. Administrations to be initiated. We take the most difficult areas because if the most difficult areas are tackled the other areas automatically become easier in course of time. In fact, the effort which you will be putting in to reach the difficult areas will give us many new insights that we can make use of this machinery for many other things—vaccines and medicines, for instance. And so

many other things which are not covered under the Public Distribution System today but still need to reach the remote areas where they are not reaching today. Now, you can go on multiplying these. As we go along, you will see that there will be so much of work for this system to do. We will all be amazed, to find out how many things do not reach the people and how much they are necessary for them.

So, I would say that we are not only starting on a specific system or a specific method of reaching the remotest areas but we are also starting a permanent machinery to be put on the ground. Whatever you want to do to reach the grass root level, there is a route. What you are in effect doing is to establish the route and nothing less than that.

So, I would like a frank discussion on this. I know we have difficulties. Even in an election time reaching some villages is difficult with all our jeeps and all our paraphernalia. In fact, you leave some of the villages out only to God and to the people. But in this system, if you tell me, say after one year, that every nook and corner of this country, every village, every small hamlet has somehow been reached, then I would say that we have done something which has never been done before in this country. So, this is the measure of the importance of this scheme.

We have been talking about catering to the poor people of this country. All parties have been talking about it. This is not a party programme; this is a programme of the people in which the governments have to co-operate. The people have to come forward to be vigilant to be able to find out what is happening, to check if there is any malpractice. It is for the villagers to show you what is happening. You cannot send a CBI team to every village. It is just not possible. So, it is also another method of rousing the conscience of the people to get their full contribution and co-operation. That is how you create an atmosphere where good administration is not only at the government level but it has the full support from the people. This is something again that we have been trying to do for the last forty years but we have not been able to achieve. We only send inquiry teams. No inquiry team coming from above, will ever succeed in finding out what is wrong in a small village. People won't come forward. They won't open their mouth. Nobody will give evidence. Only a tutored man comes and gives wrong evidence on the basis of which wrong conclusions are arrived at and wrong decisions are taken.

So, what we are doing to involve the people at the grass root level in something with which they are very vitally concerned. It involves their food. It involves their next meal. Therefore, this is a

very vital programme according to our experience. This has to be done on the basis of very close connection between the people and the Governments and the Governments at both levels, the State and the Centre. The district administrations would have a very big role. The Collector would have to take particular interest in these things. Unless he visits the spot, unless he satisfies himself that everything has been properly organised, I am afraid nothing would happen. So every person engaged in this has a task to do, has a hard job to do. In the first one or two years, this is going to be quite difficult. We cannot give up, we cannot throw up our hands and say we cannot do it. We will have to do it because we owe it to our people.

I am sure that discussions here will be frank. Let us discuss all the difficulties, all the objections. But finally we should not shoot the scheme down but see to it that it works. If this is the spirit and the approach, I am sure we will have something of a ready scheme for implementation. I don't mind even if there is a month's delay but all loose ends should be tied. It is not for television and mere publicity; this is something which need not be televised if it is not necessary; but the point is we should satisfy ourselves that it is working at the lowest level, at the farthest point in the country that we would be able to reach. If that is ensured then it does not matter how it functions after that. Once it is put on the ground, it will be maintenance, vigilance, something which the people take care of by themselves. We don't have to run everytime to that place, once the people take over. And, this is the kind of approach which we need to have to this problem.

So, I invite your comments and your suggestions and in fact it will be the State Governments and the U.T. Administrations who will actually be operating. I would say that I only co-operate and you are the ones to operate because I cannot operate from Delhi. It is very clear to me.

We Should Remain Strong and United

A YOUNG MAN, who was hardly three or four years old, when India became independent, started this century. He was Rajivji. Most of us can recall that we had taken a resolution here. The struggle of 1942 was our last struggle in the history against British Government as after that we became independent. That struggle was also the last struggle of people belonging to my generation because many of us, who had given up their studies very recently or even as students, participated in it as congress workers. This was our good fortune. But the freedom struggle of a nation does not end with independence, on the contrary, it starts with it. A new chapter starts, quite different from the previous one. Modalities adopted in both of these situations are different. I bow to you with reverence because you have earned freedom for India, but my eyes are craving to see youngmen, who will protect this independence, enrich it, strengthen it and will resolve to preserve it for ever. This independence cannot be of one generation. I have learnt that some big monument will be erected here. Naturally, here ought to be a monument. I am told that this monument will show some glimpses of the history of freedom struggle that took place in different states and the entire nation. Here, the monuments come up very soon, but the monument should not remain only monuments, they should become motivators. If a monument is not a motivator, it becomes merely a building which nobody cares to even maintain. Supposing, we constitute a good managing committee for maintaining it and only some information is being imparted to people about it, it cannot be termed as a monument that is vivacious. There should be perpetuality in it.

With independence, people thought they have got everything and everything had been achieved. There was some scrambling also, who should get what. Those who had some influence, who could manage things, who were strong enough, left others behind in this race. Those who were weak, lagged behind. This was not the aim of attaining freedom. The struggle launched in 1942 was of a self driven nature, this was not by any leader, because all the leaders had been jailed in Ahmed Nagar. So, it was a struggle launched by people. In fact this was a struggle of lakhs of workers and

youth. I remember, when we came forward to participate in it, our elderly people were happy in a way, but they lacked zeal because they were dejected as all their leaders had been put behind the bars. They were worried about the future but the youth took the reins in their hands and ran the movement! So, this was a movement of young people. That's why I want they should seek inspiration out of it.

Secondly, no top leader was out of jail. Perhaps you may recall, if any top leader was out of the jail, it was Rajaji, all others were incarcerated. And Rajaji's views were a bit different those days. Subramaniamji is sitting here. He is aware of it. That movement was the movement of people, an automatic upsurge. The determination and inspiration that people derived out of it was unprecedented. A movement is to be built again. Just now, our respected Gore Sahib asked me to mobilise people and to make an appeal to be united for solving the problems facing our country. Let us be united, let us be one. Even earlier also I have said so on many occasions, inside and outside the Parliament, that the national problems are not the problems of any party. But the problems that are being faced by the country, they cut across the party, they have nothing to do with the party.

Today, the time has come to obviate party problems for solving national problems. There may be many, who are not connected with any party. I know about many persons who got disillusioned after their experience in the parties. There is scope for them also because this is a national task. It is not essential that all good people are tied up with parties only. There are many well meaning, illustrious people, great patriots outside the parties. They also should be mobilised in order to solve our problems. I can also say that whatever may have happened during the last 44 years, India has not lagged behind. India is strong today. To some extent, it is self-reliant but there is no country in the world today, which can claim to be cent percent self-reliant. Interdependence of the countries is such that we have to co-operate with each other. Even the super powers have to sideline all other facts and they are feeling the need for adopting a new approach. We should remember that there is only one option today, and that is of evolving a consensus, of seeking help and opinion of others. And this is possible only in democracy. In any other set up or system this cannot be possible. So, we should preserve democracy.

We should groom our youth to build good future and also drive here this point that they have to protect our independence. We should motivate them and should do some exemplary work so that

they are inspired. We should chalk out some programmes to enthuse them. Inspiration is not required to be instilled in them individually. If once the motivation comes, it permeates among lakhs and crores automatically. On this occasion we should keep in mind that great movement and then work out new programmes.

I am greatly pleased that on this occasion I had the honour of being with you. I want to assure our elderly people that this is my approach. I am of the opinion that we all have to share the responsibility of taking the boat of our country to its wharf. No single party, individual or community is able to do it by itself. We all have to make concerted efforts and I will request you all to be completely identified with each other to solve our problems. We all are doing our duty, but the spirit behind this should not be to obstruct each other. It should be of watching the interest of our country, of serving the country.

We should unite our society and not divide them. Dividing a society is very easy. One slogan is enough for it. But ours is a unique society. Many tried to indulge in fissiparous activities. Even today it is going on and it may continue in future also but our society remains completely unified. Broadly speaking Indian people even today are secular. Their nature is secular and will continue to remain secular.

If riots occur, the news is published. If there are no riots, there is harmony and there is good will and unity then there is no news in it. So nothing is published. There is nothing to feel unnerved about our country. I want to tell our workers, our leaders, and they are also aware that even today our people are peaceful and peace loving. Occasionally, there may be some upheavels, some sort of storm which subsides after some time, but these are exceptions. Generally our country is peaceful. I have compared our country with other countries. I have been making this comparison even for a period of ten years. I have seen more than hundred countries. I have not merely seen their airports. I have closely observed those countries. And I understand that the position prevailing in our country is unique and we have to maintain this position. I have faith in Indian culture, Indian society, our atmosphere, our legacy and traditions. Our culture has such strength in it that it will not allow the fissiparous powers to succeed, I want to invoke that strength.

We Need a Non-Violent World

IT ALWAYS GIVES me pleasure to mix with the Jain community and take part in a Jain conference. The reason is that there is a different atmosphere here and one gets to hear something different. It is, in fact, something very old but you can call it eternally new.

For some years now, we have been going through a phase of violence in our country. Because of that we can no longer claim that the message of non-violence emanated from this country. But when we meet such great Acharyas, we feel as if we had not lost that right completely. Some of it, a fraction of it, is still with us. Perhaps, we can strengthen it again and restore to our country the position of a propagator of non-violence.

The world has gone through several destructive phases. People got fed up. Some five or six years ago the world affairs took a new turn and the stockpiling of weapons had suddenly come to a halt. First there was a halt and then the people began to talk of reducing the stockpiles. The process of disarmament began. It now appears that the world has left behind that danger when without any provocation, simply by someone pressing a wrong button and a small error on somebody's part the whole world could be reduced to ashes and there would be no one left to ask how such a mistake occurred. There would be no scope for an inquiry commission to go into detail but such fear is no longer there.

Those who had their fingers on the buttons are now thinking how this world can be allowed to exist. They have taken their fingers off the buttons. They are now thinking how the gift of life can be given to the world. While we were watching, the world situation had undergone a transformation and were not aware of it.

Earlier, whenever we made proposals for peace we feared they would not be accepted. There were two groups, two blocs and it was our effort to bring about peace between them. There is no longer any need for such proposals. Possibly, our continuous efforts had the desired effect and the danger which was looming over the world has disappeared.

But it would be a mistake to imagine that disarmament will lead to peace. The nuclear weapons might be eliminated but nations can still go to war with conventional weapons. If not bombs, there

Free rendering of speech in Hindi delivered at Jain Mahasabha on the occasion of universal friendship and forgiveness day, New Delhi, 29 September 1991

would be guns, and if not guns, even lathis or bare hands are sufficient for those who wish to fight. Disarmament is essential, highly essential, but it is not all.

Along with disarmament there should be a change in the minds of people. If thoughts of violence, revenge, vengeance, persist it makes no difference with whom you are fighting. The urge to fight must be abolished from the minds of people. In this connection, as Kothariji mentioned, when the Russian leader said, "we need non-violent world", real revolution took place in that single sentence. We have not realised it. A few persons have understood the magnitude of that statement. The first revolution took place in Russia but a second revolution took place when the Russian leader uttered that sentence. And that occurred in Delhi. Delhi has seen many ups and downs. Many changes have taken place here, many kingdoms rose and fell, many empires rose and fell. But this revolution has not been recorded properly by anyone. This credit has come to Delhi for endorsement of a non-violent world order from the leader of a country where a violent revolution had occurred and was still continuing. We must understand this and I am grateful to Kothariji for it. I was going to stress the same thing. I told him that since non-violence was going to be discussed here I would like to bring out the importance of Delhi in this matter.

There is another aspect of non-violence. As long as forbearance is not practised non-violence cannot be fully established. The two are like two sides of a coin. The feeling of violence will continue to exist so long as forbearance does not prevail.

There is much violence in our country today. We must spread the message of forbearance now. This effort must be made by the government, people and even by institutions. We must give up the habit of blaming one another, complaining against one another, whether on a public issue or an official matter. The effort should be to strike new path. This should result in creating a climate of non-violence.

It is our endeavour to bring all political parties together on national issues so that all of us make an effort to find a solution to national problems. We are not making any promise that any single party can succeed in finding a solution. The problem is so big that any party by itself cannot solve it. Let us give up criticising each other at Party forums or otherwise and apply ourselves to finding a solution to the main problem. That is the spirit in which we have to work.

Thanks to the blessings of Acharyaji we have succeeded in this effort so far. All parties have helped in achieving this success.

When we unitedly work for the success of any effort we are sure to attain success. It is our hope that this approach of ours, this point of view and this way of looking at our problems, will succeed in future too.

We need your blessings, the blessings of Acharyaji. With that feeling of encouragement we shall go ahead. I am grateful that I have been able to meet you all and obtain the 'darshan' of Acharyaji.

VISWA—A Unique Project for Rural People

YOUR CHIEF MINISTER has explained to you the main features of the project VISWA—being inaugurated today—the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi. We have been observing this day for many years. Every year, we plan programmes on second October. In the morning in Delhi, we go to Rajghat, participate in the prayer meetings and start some social welfare programmes. But during all these years, I have not come across a programme of this dimension which is being planned and executed. On behalf of myself and the Government of India, I heartily congratulate Shri Bangarappa and his colleagues on this occasion.

We are aware of the various problems facing our country. They are not new ones. We have been confronting them for many decades. There is poverty in the villages. Wealth is concentrated in towns and cities. If anybody wants a job, if one wants to earn his livelihood, he or she has to go to cities like Bangalore or Mysore. Every year, we find lakhs and lakhs of people migrating to cities. Every day, thousands of people from different parts of the country flock into Bombay and stay there. We cannot prevent them from doing so. They have no facilities to make a living in their villages. They come from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Bihar and from different places to Bombay and to Bangalore. Is it feasible to provide them with water, electricity and housing facilities? Moreover, if intellectuals, able-bodied workers and others leave

the villages and migrate to the cities, who will remain in the villages except the old and infirm?

We are responsible for this state of affairs. Gandhiji had repeatedly, told us and warned us many a time, even till his last days. He deplored the conditions in the villages and had told us to provide the villagers an opportunity to earn a livelihood in the village itself. Otherwise, there would be no salvation for the country. We listened to him and did something but much needs to be done. Have we not spent money? Yes, in plenty. Something like 2000 to 3000 crores of rupees have been spent and we are still spending under the I.R.D.P. Projects.

We do not know how the money is being spent. It is not necessary to allot more funds. If the present allotment can be properly utilised, within the next five years, we can provide training facilities to about five lakh villagers. If a villager is able to earn his livelihood by working in the village itself, poverty can be removed from the villages and there will be new life there. We do not know when we can expect such a scene in the villages. But I am sure this programme VISWA has this goal. This programme needs co-operation from everyone. It cannot be completed successfully by a Chief Minister alone.

We are from villages. We know what it is like in the villages. If we are able to extend all our co-operation I am sure the programme would be a cent per cent success. Apart from these five lakhs, if we enable crores of people to stay back in the villages, our problems will be lessened. Villages will prosper and consequently the country too will prosper. I have just now seen here. Since I also come from a village and I am eager to know what is going on here.

I asked some of them how much one gets per day. They said 25 rupees. I asked them if they could take the product to the cities for selling, what would be their income. They said 300 rupees. If a person produces a thing worth 300 rupees but sells it for 25 rupees, where is the justice? Where does the remaining amount go? Please think about this. We must put an end to this.

A person getting 25 rupees gets 50 or 60 rupees, if he gets enough profit, he will not leave the village or his house. Though I have been in the cities for many years, even today, I remember my village and my house where I lived during my childhood. We are really proud of our villages. Nobody will leave his house unless in dire need or when he is not able to earn his daily bread. As long as he can earn his livelihood there is no problem. Therefore, we have to provide him some employment or means of livelihood. Then the migration to cities with the sole purpose of earning a livelihood would stop.

I want to tell you one thing more. If our product is up to the mark, they can be sold at a higher rate be it in India or anywhere in the world. They do not care for machine-made products. They have better machines than us. They do not pay more price for machine-made products. They ask for hand-made products. We have these hand-made products and we have lakhs and lakhs of artisans who can produce such things. But we are not organising them nor are we making arrangements to send their products outside for sale. What we need is an organisation to co-ordinate the supply and the demand.

The Government is ready to do this. But the Government alone cannot do anything. You have to organise the villages and come forward. We can make arrangements to send the articles to different places to fetch better price. If we succeed in organising this system the way it was envisaged by Mahatma Gandhi, we can achieve the 'Grama Swaraj.' Bapu's dream will come true.

I am very happy that such a programme has been inaugurated today. I once again congratulate the Government of Karnataka on venturing this project. I request all of you to co-operate wholeheartedly for the success of this project and I assure you of all help and assistance on behalf of the Government of India. If you succeed in implementing this project, I am prepared to ask the other States to follow suit.

Time to Take Hard Decisions

THIS MEETING HAS been called at a very short notice and you must have come here at considerable inconvenience to yourselves. But I thought that this meeting is necessary. Certain incidents that have erupted in several States in the past few months have necessitated this meeting. The meeting, as I see it, is not going to be a ritualistic type of gathering like what we have had several times before. We will have to come to very hard decisions. I have no illusion and I have no hesitation in saying that the decisions that would have to be taken at this meeting, both at the Central and the States level, are going to be hard. And there is no

Speech while inaugurating the meeting of the Chief Ministers, New Delhi, 4 October 1991

denying of the fact that once these decisions are taken we will have to monitor the implementation of the decisions and we will have to insist on every decision being implemented in full.

Therefore, this meeting has difference and I thank you for having made it convenient to come at such a short notice.

In recent months the country has witnessed a spate of atrocities against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. These incidents of atrocities against the weaker sections of society remind us that we have not yet succeeded in creating an atmosphere of security for them in this country. The nature of the atrocities has also been a matter of grave concern to me and to all of us, of course. I also know that often the efforts of the Government to help these oppressed and disadvantaged sections by providing them with assets like land and implementing the laws for protecting their interest, themselves, have resulted in enhanced attacks on them by those who are opposed to these measures. It is important for us to realise that these incidents stem from the very circumstances of deprivation faced by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. A large section among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is employed as agricultural labourers, many of whom are not paid even the minimum wages prescribed by law. The majority of bonded labourers is also from these deprived classes. A substantial number among the Scheduled Castes lead a subsistence living as sharecroppers or small and marginal farmers. Many of the atrocities that take place can be traced to conflicts over the possession, ownership and cultivation of lands by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Even in non-agricultural jobs, such occupations as are shunned by members of other castes are almost entirely to be performed by the Scheduled Castes. Attempts by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to break away from this syndrome of deprivation and improve their lot and to claim what is theirs rightfully, are often the principal cause of the atrocities that are perpetrated against them.

All this happens despite there being a plethora, of constitutional provisions and special enactments to protect the rights of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and for the removal of disabilities and discrimination they suffer from. The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 have been on the statute book and detailed guidelines have also been issued by government to prevent atrocities against the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. We have worked out special strategies like the Special Component Plan for the scheduled Castes and Tribal Sub-Plan for

the Scheduled Tribes for their development through the planning mechanism. We have evolved special schemes for the educational development, economic support and employment promotion of these classes. Despite all these, their lot remains a great deal to be desired and in all the rural areas their lives often lack a basic sense of security. They will continue to be badly exploited and as for the change in their social circumstances, they are still in a very pitiable state.

So, something needs to be done; something effective, absolutely effective, needs to be done. So, this meeting, as I see it, is a meeting to put an end to all similar meetings in future. There should be no need for us to come again to Delhi and consider this as if this problem is being discovered for the first time. We know everything about it. Now is the time to devise ways and means of implementing it, taking final, firm decisions, going back and proceeding to implement the decisions. This is how I would like to treat this meeting and this is how I would like the honourable Chief Ministers to look at this meeting.

For the majority of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes who live in rural areas, access to the law and order machinery for redress of their grievances just does not exist. This problem has been compounded by a lack of sensitivity on the part of the police and the district administration.

The long history of this system and its deep political roots in the Indian social psyche, calls for action which should cut across party lines. This is why we are meeting here today, and that is why I would like to stress the non-party nature of this problem. In Parliament and in State Legislatures we witness a very common spectacle which doesn't do any credit to any political party in India. When it is the Central Government run by one party, members of the other parties raise this question as if it is only one party that is responsible for it. If it is another party in the State, suddenly something is said which is exactly the opposite of what I just said. So, it means that we are playing or we are tending to play politics in this rather than addressing the problem. I have seen to my amazement in Parliament, something happens in a particular State, members belonging to that party say that it is a State subject. The same thing happens in another state and Parliament is supposed to take cognizance of it according to them. Now, this double standard will not do. We will have to decide here, either it is a State Subject or it is a subject which Parliament has to take cognizance of. There can't be a third way; there can't be a halfway house; there can't be a convenient switch from one argument to another whenever we find that it suits one party and doesn't suit another party. This will

not do and I am raising this deliberately because this is the assembly, this is the gathering, this is the forum where this matter needs to be raised and needs to be answered.

Immediate action in this matter is called for in States which record recurring incidence of atrocities. There are also States where there has been a steady rise in incidents over the past five years. This trend needs to be immediately arrested and reversed. I would urge each State to formulate a strategy for the prevention of atrocities against the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Necessary legislation, as the Home Minister just said, and institutional-infrastructure is already in place. I know that very often it is easier to pass a law than to implement it. Yet, in a matter like this implementation is the very essence. Some determined steps in this direction are needed urgently, if the law as the expressed will of the people is to have any meaning. The law enforcers themselves, in many cases, fail to act promptly or collude with the other side. In such cases we should not hesitate to subject them to the process of law. All that is required is the will to implement the requisite measures at all levels, down to the village level. Let us discuss this matter dispassionately threadbare and, in this Conference, let us show the will that we will not hesitate to translate whatever decisions we take into action. The goal that we should strive for is the total integration of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as an indistinguishable part of the mainstream of our society. That should be our aim.

I am coming next to the subject which we are going to discuss at this conference. On the Independence Day, I had drawn attention to the close link between peace in rural India and the maintenance of land records. Frequently, land disputes assume violent proportions and take on the character of intercaste conflicts; but the real cause of these conflicts can be traced to improper maintenance of land records. Maintaining proper village land records, therefore, is of utmost importance so that people know about their ownership and proprietary rights. This again is nothing new. This has been discussed, discussed *ad nauseum* for years and years but I am not sure that anything effective has been devised all over the country.

I remember when I was Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. I had in 1972 written a long letter to the then Finance Minister of the Government of India, Shri Y.B.Chavan, requesting him to give some money so as to have a crash programme to correct all these records. I am sure the situation may be the same in many other States. Well, We have been able to do something but much more needs to be done. This is a matter of high priority and it has some

linkage with the weaker sections of society. If a strongman is there in a village, it doesn't matter whether his name is written in the records or not, he knows how to defend himself. Therefore, it doesn't matter for him. But for a poor person, for the small person, for the weak person, a land record is a weapon. It is not just a record. It is not just a piece of paper, not one entry tucked away somewhere in the Tehsil Office. It is a weapon for him. You are giving a weapon in his hands. If he has no weapon, he has no way of fighting the more influential sections of society who may always or sometimes want to deprive him of his rights. Therefore, giving land should also be followed or accompanied by giving him the right in the shape of a record and also helping him to become viable economically.

So, first, there is the actual action of giving land to him; next is the action of making him the legally valid owner of the land. Then follows the economic action of making him live on the land so that he becomes a viable part of the society and doesn't part with his land in sheer distress if he doesn't have bullocks, if he doesn't have money, if he doesn't have the capital. If this is not done, then it is only a question of time before he sells the land away to someone next door and becomes landless again. Now, these are our very common experiences. I am telling you nothing new. These three links exist between indigence on the one hand and viability on the other. One of the important links is land records, which alone can give him the legal right to assert whatever is his and ward off any attack on him from the legal point of view. So, this we will have to look into tomorrow. Maybe, you will have to depute your Revenue Ministers who will have to go into it. They may have to have a small committee of Revenue Ministers plus someone from the Government of India. Give them about three or four months time to come back and maybe after that we will have to meet again to see that the land record system in this country is modernised. We have the convenience of computers these days. You can have billions and billions of records, if you wish, just on a small disc. Now, this being the convenience which is available, it will be a pity if we don't take advantage of all this. We must realise that if we still continue to have many errors in Government records, every error can lead to bloodshed. It will be a great pity. We will have to go into it in greater detail. We have got the Electronics Department, we have got other people working on these things. They are all adept in keeping very large, huge data bases wherever necessary and at the touch of a button you can get whatever you want. So, that should be our aim.

The other thing is about the co-operatives. This again is one of the age-old problems. We pride ourselves on the fact that the

co-operative movement is more than a hundred years old but all the irregularities connected with it are also hundred years old. So, we will have to do something about it. We will have to go into it in greater detail.

Another thing which perhaps you will have to consider tomorrow—I am making this a kind of a hostage meeting because once you are here I do not wish to let you go so easily, until all the matters which are weighing on my mind and your mind are at least discussed in part; it doesn't matter whether we do or we do not take final decisions. What I am going to tell you just now is important from the States point of view. I have realised the importance of this matter when I was in the State. This is about the mounting expenditure on the non-Plan side. Now, there are several State Governments—I do not want to name them—which always cut the expenditure of Education Department whenever a cut is necessary. The axe first falls on the Education Department, along with that on Social Welfare. Now those affected—the teachers, the students—cannot really raise their voice. So, whenever a cut is needed, the cut falls on the Education Department, on the Social Welfare Department. The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes may just whimper a little but will become quiet subsequently. Now, this approach will not do. I am not prepared to accept any cuts enforced on schemes which relate to the welfare of the human beings. I am trying to impress this on the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission has been good enough to respond to this suggestion. We had the first meeting of the full Planning Commission in which, I think, there has been a consensus on this. At the same time we can't divert Plan funds to non-Plan expenditure and go on a spending spree for all the time to come. I think the time has come now when we have to cry a halt to this practice.

In this particular matter, there is one aspect pertaining to Dearness Allowance increases. In the States, I know, every Chief Minister becomes unhappy whenever there is a DA increase at the Central level. There was a time when we did not follow the Central pattern. We then said we will not follow the Central pattern because the conditions are different; the standard of living may be different; the cost of living may be different. But now almost every State is following the Central pattern because this is how they buy peace in their own States. There was no way of buying peace otherwise. There would be a strike about a week before the General Election.

I had a strike notice to deal with in Andhra Pradesh just about six or seven days before filing of nominations was to start in the

1972 elections. What could I do? I had to agree. I had to sign on the dotted line. Now, this may have been a great victory for the employees. But, what about the result of that victory? What were the consequences of that victory on the lives of the people? To meet such DA increase you may have to cut sometimes from the Plan expenditure itself. So, we will have to come to some decision on this. If there is to be sacrifice, if the country is passing through a difficult phase—we all know that it is passing through a difficult phase—let us apportion the sacrifices, let us all be prepared to postpone our demands to a later date. On all sides, we will have to decide about this. If you want only one section of people to sacrifice and others not to sacrifice, then that is not going to work. So, on this also the Central Government and the State Governments would have to come to some understanding on what is to be done with the non-Plan expenditure, what is to be done with the DA increase which is due according to the rule, whether it is to be automatically raised and if so from where the money would come. We have to consider this also. I am not opposing any demand. I am only placing before you the fact of life which we have to face in the coming months. The Finance Minister has told you, told the country, what the situation of our finances is and therefore, there should be no further argument on how we are going to cope with this situation.

The last but not the least important matter which we have to discuss is the question of prices. In this country we have an easy way out when one party blames another party for the increase in prices. The State Governments blame the Centre and the Centre blames the State Governments. I think this type of attitude should change.

We will have to come to a conclusion on what is Centre's part, what is the State's part in controlling the prices. I am sure that we will be able to do it if we wish to. Let us not again play politics in the matter of prices. If prices are going up, let us find out why they are going up. Is it because of laxity on the part of the Central Government or laxity on the part of the State Governments or laxity on the part of the administration or the international compulsions which all of us are subject to. What is it that we have to do and what is it that has brought about this situation? I am told that there is little improvement in the price situation during the last one week or so. But I do not consider that as a very big matter of satisfaction. We will have to go into this question thoroughly. We must have more meetings and arrive at a consensus. We must have an understanding on what needs to be done. Some discipline—in fiscal and other areas—has to be brought about no matter which party runs a State Government, no matter which party runs the

Central Government. So, it should be possible to come to a consensus about arresting the prices and deal with the inflationary pressures that we are experiencing day in and day out. This is one of the important matters on which I would like to consult you. In fact, it is a mutual consultation, a consultation all around. This is a matter concerning both the States and the Centre and there is no question of apportioning responsibility. There is no question of the State or the Centre being put on the dock. The relationship between the States and the Centre is not one of the prosecutor and the accused. We are all responsible for it and we will have to go into it, find solutions and stick to those solutions. If we have to cut the expenditure somewhere, let us find out where to cut. If we have to bring down the expenditure, let us find out where to do that and how. If we have to go in for borrowing, I am not sure whether we will be getting much assistance from outside, we will have to consider that. But the assistance may or may not be forthcoming if oil prices are rising, if fertiliser prices are rising. So, from where will it come? All this will have to be discussed by us.

This is the kind of agenda I am placing before you. The agenda may be old but the decisions have to be new and they will have to be taken with a certain amount of determination. That alone will save the country.

Towards a Strong and Vibrant India

I HAVE GREAT pleasure in welcoming you all to this first meeting of the reconstituted National Integration Council. We are meeting at a time when the country is facing, perhaps, the gravest of challenges since Independence. This is a time when we have to demonstrate that as a people, as a nation, we are all one and we are all imbued with the single-minded objective of building a strong and vibrant India.

The National Integration Council has met from time to time since 1962 to discuss vital issues having a bearing on national integration

Speech at the first meeting of the reconstituted National Integration Council, New Delhi, 2 November 1991

and communal harmony. In today's meeting we propose to devote our attention to the question of communal harmony in the context of the Ram Janma Bhumi-Babri Masjid issue. There are other equally important and major issues like terrorism, militancy and secessionist activities in certain parts of the country confronting the nation. We shall address all these national issues in the Council. However, the communal harmony issue has been chosen for this meeting because the disquieting scenario that exists today is threatening to tear apart our national fabric. It is the considered view of the Government that this important forum should be utilized as often as necessary and in any event more often than hitherto to iron out national issues dispassionately and to create a congenial climate for their solution.

Since the dawn of history, Indian society has been characterised by a spirit of tolerance which is perhaps unique in the world. While being true to our own faith and to our own way of living, we have always respected the rights of others to practise and propagate their faith and to choose their own way of life. It is this that has given India a rich civilisation of remarkable cultural diversity that we can be proud of. The common thread of unity running through this diversity has given a distinctive character to Indian society. This underlying unity has been in evidence even during those periods of history when India was not a single politico-administrative unit but was divided into many kingdoms.

It is against this backdrop that the present developments are particularly distressing. In the last few years, the communal virus has been spreading and communal riots have taken a heavy toll of human life. They have brought untold misery to the people. The poor have been among the worst sufferers. All of us who are gathered here must ponder and seriously think why these aberrations are taking place in our society. It seems that the wisdom, the tolerance and the spirit of accommodation of our ancient society are progressively being forgotten while the institutions that bind together a modern nation, such as a secular outlook, respect for rule of law and the institutional framework for settlement of disputes are being ignored.

Secularism is a distinguishing feature of an enlightened nation. There is increased realisation among most modern nations that secularism must constitute a basic tenet of public policy. Even where the vast majority of citizens of a country belong to a particular religion or faith, the trend has been towards keeping religion out of administration and politics. It is important for the State to practise neutrality between citizens of different religious denominations. In a country like ours which supports a rich variety

of religions, faiths and cultures, this is essential as a guiding principle.

It is for us who are in position of responsibility to inculcate in the people respect for and faith in the institutions which form the backbone of a modern state. We have given ourselves a secular Constitution. Freedom of religion, freedom to manage religious affairs and prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion have been guaranteed as fundamental rights in the Constitution. The legislature, the executive and the judiciary have been assigned their specific areas of responsibility. Each of these institutions must be permitted to work freely for the betterment of all. The executive must keep the larger interest in view even if it means sacrificing the short-term gain. The legislature has to reflect the will of the people as a whole and enact measures for promoting the national goals. We are fortunate in having a judiciary that is acknowledged by all to be free and independent. Its decisions have to be respected by all concerned. We expect that on matters like the Ram Janma Bhumi-Babri Masjid controversy, which is already *sub judice* and in which some important orders have already been passed by the Court, everyone concerned will honour the Court's orders, both in letter and spirit, and will not do anything which could be considered as showing disrespect for the judiciary and thereby to the Constitution itself.

Communalism is an extremely dangerous virus. It generates hatred, and it pits man against man, brother against brother. It is unfortunate that much of our nation's energy and resources have to be diverted to the containment of communal violence. The nation can ill afford this. For our nation, economic development and upliftment of the poor masses is the need of the hour. The country is facing an economic crisis of unprecedented dimensions. We have embarked on a very ambitious set of policies to enable us not only to overcome this crises, but also to establish India as a strong country in the comity of nations. We have the enormous task of spreading literacy and education, improving standards of nourishment and health care, providing food and shelter to the poor, raising people's incomes and providing employment opportunities. These are the tasks which should be commanding our attention and our time. For the attainment of these goals we need peace and order in society and a spirit of co-operation amongst the people.

I may add here that apart from all these compelling reasons, there is another equally compelling reason, perhaps even more compelling, why India should appear as functioning as a united nation without any fissures, without any internal differences on religion, on caste or any other basis. I have had the experience of

interacting with several other Prime Ministers and Heads of State during my visits abroad as well as members of the press from abroad. When they do not have anything to say against our policies, the question that is hurled at is what is happening to Ram Janma Bhumi. Now, this has not only remained within the country as one of the most difficult problems but it has travelled abroad and it is figuring in the kind of attitude that other countries, the media of other countries are adopting towards India just as a point of criticism, just to say that whatever the policies, they may be good, but at the same time there is something inherently wrong with India and the Indian society. They cannot remain peaceful. They cannot remain united.

This is the kind of innuendo one gets from the questions put to us and from the talks that we have—of course, all done in a very diplomatic, polished language, but nonetheless equally critical if you really remove all the embellishments. That is what I think is very important. This problem and problems like this are marring India's image abroad and this is very important from the point of view of what we really want to do with our new policies. We want to integrate the Indian economy with the world economy; we want to become a model for investment, for progress, for peace, for secularism, for tolerance and this is the mission which we have accepted for India. Having accepted this, it is necessary to see that whatever is coming in the way of this image being built up abroad is removed at the earliest. I just wanted to add this as one of the facets which has to be kept in view.

The pace of change is accelerating all over the world. Historic developments are taking place, and many countries are progressing rapidly. We cannot let India be left behind in this race. We, therefore, need to put together the energies of all our people, no matter which religion, which class, which caste they belong to, and concentrate on the most important task of building our nation.

India's political democracy has withstood major challenges. I credit this success, above all, to the maturity, sagacity and sense of responsibility of India's political leaders and political parties. I am confident that all shades of political opinion represented in this Council understand their responsibility and are equally keen to ensure that this issue is resolved quickly. A resolution of this conflict should not be seen as a victory of one group over another, but that of the nation as a whole.

The unity and integrity of our country must be preserved at all cost. It is above politics, above individual gain, above the interests of one group or another. It is fundamental to the prosperity of the nation as a whole. Only this can enable us to withstand the

destructive forces within the country and, the aggressive designs from outside.

Government has been concerned over the recent developments in the Ram Janma Bhumi-Babri Masjid dispute. This problem has been evading a solution for quite some time. Government is committed to finding a negotiated solution to the dispute in a manner which will respect the sentiments of both the communities involved. In the event of such settlement not being reached, the Government favours a solution by Court verdict. This dispute needs to be resolved speedily and amicably, and it is incumbent upon all of us to show restraint in whatever we say or do in regard to this issue. It is essential, therefore, to strive to evolve a national consensus in regard to this sensitive matter. I do appreciate that this Council cannot probably find an immediate solution to this vexed issue, may be in this very meeting. But, if the Council can help to cool down passions and improve the atmosphere it will have served its purpose.

The National Integration Council is an important forum, and its deliberations and recommendations have on many occasions provided valuable guidance to Government. I call upon the Members to give thought to the issue in today's agenda. We are open to all constructive ideas and will sincerely try to give effect to any consensus that might emerge from today's discussions. Given goodwill and sincerity on all sides there are few problems that cannot be overcome.

Meeting the Challenge of the Twenty-first Century

I AM HAPPY to be in your midst today. I welcome the participants, including those from abroad who are attending this conference being held in the memory of Indira Gandhi.

For Indira Gandhi the world was one human family. It had room enough for us all to live together in peace, to work together for

Speech at the Third Indira Gandhi Conference on 'The Challenge of the Twenty-first Century', New Delhi, 19 November 1991

our common good. The future of this human family was a matter close to her heart.

We remember this day Rajiv Gandhi under whose chairmanship the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust made an important contribution in, among other things, bringing intellectuals together in a spirit of exploration and discovery, in the quest for answers to age-old dilemmas, in an endeavour to find new paths to the future. Rajiv Gandhi's own vision of India and humanity grew out of his search for solutions to the human predicament. It is a vision which will continue to inspire all of us.

The theme of the conference is indeed meaningful and timely. We are at the threshold of the next century. We must take stock of what has been achieved, all that remains to be done, the uncertainties and the dilemmas, as we move into the future, anticipating the paths that lie ahead. Let us reflect on the choices that are open to us. Let us work towards making the twenty-first century a century of fulfilled hopes.

The agenda of your conference anticipates the broad areas of concern which we must take into account as we move into the years ahead. The subjects that will be discussed in the conference are of deep and abiding concern to us all, as individuals, as members of the society, as a nation and as part of humankind. Even as we grope with the turmoils and uncertainties, the hopes and the frustrations of this century, we must reflect on the ways which would lead to a brighter future.

I do agree that while there have been ages of uncertainty in history, there is perhaps none as bewildering as ours. I would only wish to add that we could not get bewildered by this. The pace of change in the present century has indeed been astonishing, be it in the area of politics, or scientific and technological development, or social and economic restructuring. Yesterday's heresies are today's truths. Today's truths are heresies the day after. The dilemmas which confront us in almost every sphere, are indeed many and deep. But even while recognising this fact, let us also beware that we do not let dilemmas overawe us. This is the basic challenge which we face. Even in the midst of the uncertainty of our times we must find all that which is of lasting value. We must look for those ideas, those trends, those institutions which will help us build a strong bridge into the future. While there is a lot to be said for the viewpoint that everything is relative, I do believe that we must at some point draw the line and make our choice based on past experience and the wisdom that has come down to us through the ages. There is much truth in T.S.Eliot's memorable lines.

“But here upon earth you have the reward of the good and ill that was done by those who have gone before you.

And all that is ill you may repair if you walk together in humble repentance, expiating the sins of your fathers.

And all that was good you must fight to keep with hearts as devoted as those of your fathers who fought to gain it.”(Choruses from ‘The Rock’)

If we look back in time we realise that humanity has indeed progressed in many ways. There is a lot that we have achieved in ensuring for ourselves a more secure future and a better quality of life. We still, of course, have a long way to go but the beginnings have been made. In fact, our ancestors many millennia ago, made, things simpler for us. They took a decision, very thoughtfully on our behalf, on behalf of generations unborn, that they would settle down. They decided that they had enough of their never ending treks following the natural migration of wild herds. They decided to settle down to agriculture. They fashioned the plough and in so doing fashioned their own future. Over the millennia, humanity has built upon this basic decision. We have built block by block. We cobbled together our first dwellings as we made obeisance to Mother Earth, and reached out heavenwards in our skyscrapers. We invented the wheel, and rolled on to a whole new world of progress. We learnt to write, and opened a universe of knowledge upon which we have continued to build. Of course, we had built a lot of knowledge even before we started writing and that has come down to us through many generations and in some ways that is a little more valuable than the word that has come through writing. The advances in science and technology have opened new vistas of progress, even as they have brought with them the powers of utter devastations and to a considerable extent divorced the individual from the larger social purpose. It has become possible today to improve the quality of life, of even those who have hitherto been on the fringes of existence. Science and technology have brought the world closer. We can, in very real terms, live together today as one family, if only we choose to.

Even in our relations with each other, in terms of groups, as nations, we have come a long way. We have left behind us, though not yet totally, the struggle between the clansmen of old, the medieval battles, the fragile concept of the balance of power. We have seen ourselves through the World War, though we almost stumbled into the third one. We have reached a point where many an old tension has dissipated. In more recent times we have celebrated the withering away of the East-West confrontation. Surging numbers of humanity have emerged as free people from

centuries of tyranny. Slavery, colonialism and apartheid may well soon be distant words. There is an upsurge of the democratic spirit. These developments, coupled with tremendous advances in science and technology have opened up revolutionary possibilities making it possible for us to work together on terms of equality for the common good. But this is not a matter for complacency. There are still a number of disturbing trends we have to cope with, not the least among them being the fact that armaments have not been substantially dismantled, local conflicts are not yet a thing of the past and that we still have to attain a world order based on equity. We have to guard against the very real danger of these trends bringing to nought the possibility of ensuring for ourselves and the future generations a more secure and a better future. Let us be forewarned. Let not the twenty-first century become the century of blighted hopes.

The future of mankind, the full flowering of the individual personality, the well being of all, are issues that have for long been of deep and abiding concern to India. Writing in the *Harijan* in 1938 Mahatma Gandhi said : “One thing is certain. If the mad race for armaments continues, it is bound to result in a slaughter such has never occurred in history. If there is a victor left, the very victory will be a living death for the nation that emerges victorious. There is no escape from the impending doom save through a bold and unconditional acceptance of the non-violent method with all its glorious implication.” Mahatma Gandhi did not have “a shadow of doubt that the world of tomorrow will be, must be a society based on non-violence.” (*Towards New Horizons*: Pyarelal). This belief, this optimism has never left us. We in this country are convinced that weapons of destruction cannot sustain the future of mankind. We have made this point repeatedly. In 1954, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru issuing his historic appeal for a standing agreement said: “Humankind has to awaken itself to the reality and face the situation with determination and assert itself to avert a calamity.”

In 1978, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi appealed: “Let us all co-operate to save humanity. In a war the dominant thought is to win. Can we do less for peace?”

We have continued to build upon these convictions. In the Third Special Session on Disarmament of the General Assembly, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi proposed an Action Plan for ushering in a Nuclear Weapon Free and Non-Violent World Order. India is not alone in its belief in disarmament. Peace-loving people across the countries and continents find in disarmament the only viable answer for ensuring future security.

Just as we must work to build a world free from strife, we must also address ourselves to those basic causes which bring tension and threaten peace. We have always felt that the economic gap between the developed and the developing countries is an important cause for tensions. This is an issue which requires to be addressed urgently. Developing countries require to tackle on a very urgent footing problems posed by population, unemployment, poverty and environmental degradation, among others. For their efforts to be attended with success they require at their stage of economic development an international economic environment which is conducive to and which rests upon co-operative action between the North and the South. In keeping with the spirit of democracy, developing countries must be given the chance to widen their options for growth. A new consensus is needed in areas of critical importance to future development. This consensus must take into account the fact that development goals must be based on a realistic assessment of levels of development. They must also take into account the historical and social conditions which obtain in different countries. The consensus must be based on equity and on the absence of all discrimination. The consensus must grow out of a recognition that the central question today is the development of all humankind.

As we approach the next century, the challenge of evolving this consensus looms large before us. The dangers inherent in the present situation are well illustrated in the matter of our need for sustainable development in the context of environmental problems. Both ends of the spectrum, plenty as well as poverty, have contributed to environmental degradation. The developing and the developed countries together must find that path of development which in the words of the World Commission on Environment and Development: "Meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs."

But is this to be? Profligacy of consumption in some countries and poverty of the developing have compounded the problem. We must get thinking on ways in which the developed countries can bring down their consumption levels to acceptable limits and the manner in which developing countries can be provided assistance to find alternatives that are acceptable and environment-friendly. While on the subject of environment I am reminded of these irreverent lines from Ogden Nash:

"I think that I shall never see,/A billboard lovely as a tree.
Perhaps unless the billboards fall/I will never see a tree at all".

The issue of sustainable development and environment is just one of the many which confirms the point that in an interdependent

world, equity can help in safeguarding the future of all. Similarly, while a number of countries, for example ours, are faced with a tremendous population problem and are evolving programmes on how best to tackle it, we also realise that even if the growth of population was to be curbed, investments would have to be made so that population becomes a useful asset. In no small measure will the success of these efforts depend upon the kind of international environment that we are placed in, the availability of resources, the free flow of scientific and related information.

At a time like this, we look to the United Nations. More democratic than its predecessor, the League, it is our hope that the United Nations will continue to evolve to take into account the concerns and aspirations of all humankind and help it in finding peace, security, equity and prosperity.

The advances in science and technology which have revolutionised prospects for human progress; the growth of the media which brings into sharp focus both the plenty and poverty of this world; the spread of the democratic spirit; the realisation that development to be sustainable cannot rest on the fragile base of social tensions—all these have contributed to the growing acceptance of the viewpoint that poverty alleviation and individual development on the one hand, and economic growth on the other, reinforce each other. They are important components of a whole. The point is how much do we choose of what and how we go about it. That is the central issue. And this issue is likely to gain in importance as the years go by, as the aspirations of the people continue to rise, as science and technology bring new opportunities. The choices which will be offered may be competing once, but increasingly close, making decision-taking that much more difficult. This is a dilemma which policy makers will increasingly have to contend with, as well as participants at the conference who are slated to discuss the subject “Economic Organisation, Entrepreneurship and State Mediation.”

I think that the question here is not of, either or. The point is how much of what, when and where. While there is little doubt that the body of opinion which envisaged an extensive role for the State is coming to increasingly veer round to the view that the market must have an important role in development, the issue of limits requires to be addressed very carefully. Which are the areas which must be left to the entrepreneur? Are there some areas where the government must intervene to the exclusion of the entrepreneur? Or, should it intervene to support him? Should state mediation itself be disciplined by market forces? What should be the relationship between markets themselves? Between one domestic market and

another? Between regional groupings? Are such groupings desirable at all and in what circumstances? And we can go on. After a point, the question is one of trade-off. Plotting the contours of choosing between alternatives in this area is going to be no easy task and yet what we make of the twenty-first century will in no small measure rest upon the validity of the kind of choice we make.

Whatever be the choice it will have to be one which contributes to the development of human excellence and strengthens society which is the very base on which must rest any super structure of development.

I mentioned the individual in relation to society because the two are inextricably linked. The relationship in fact is a symbiotic one. Excellence in the individual can strengthen society, even as society can help the individual attain this excellence. The issue of individual freedom and collective responsibility which the conference will also be discussing is in many ways closely linked to this larger question. This question of individual freedom reminds me of Kirilov in Dostoyevsky's "Devils" who decides that he must kill himself in order to demonstrate his perfect freedom. This, of course, is an extreme example, though it is debatable whether even suicide is a perfectly free act. I think we would rather agree with Durkheim that even suicide is by no means independent of social conditions. The basic point is that even for individualism to be fulfilling, it must find its moorings in society. It must draw from society its purpose and sustenance. Making a choice between individual freedom and collective responsibility may not really be possible because very often the one flows into the other. In many cases the need to preserve individual freedom may itself make collective responsibility necessary!

The place of the individual in society is also linked with the impact of the science and technology upon society, upon way of thinking. The first Law of Motion propounded by Galileo, led to the dissolution of the pre-scientific outlook, from which there has been no looking back and which dissolution paved the way for ever accelerating progress.

Science and technology have opened limitless vistas of progress. But the progress which has come on the crest of scientific and technological advance has also taken its toll. It has cut the individual loose from age-old ties of the family, of kinship. These ties have dissolved without anything as comparably protective and sheltering taking their place. The individual finds himself quite alone, more vulnerable, more confused. There is growing apathy to the surrounding social reality. Some have given themselves up to acquisitiveness at the altar of consumerism, others not so successful

fall by the way side and in the harsh light of consumerism which is alluring but not theirs to be, recoil from society and fuel the fires of social tensions, social aberrations. Yet others apply themselves with ever greater intensity to the acquisition of every contracting circles of knowledge, again to the exclusion of the world outside. Increasingly, we are witness to a phenomenon which Durkheim called anomie, which denotes the condition of the individual isolated from society. If this trend continues, the individual may well soon be totally devoid of his humanity. his power to reflect upon the social reality, characteristics which are at the very core of all that is human in his being. In our own country we do have such examples here and there, mercifully not so many, but still whatever examples we have and the manner in which they are functioning is indicative that this could increase and create a problem which we will find very difficult to face unless we tackle it right now. There is a real danger of the human being evolving into something else, whether more advanced or retrograde, I leave that to you to decide. Bertrand Russel in his usual perceptive manner made an almost similar point though rather differently when he said : “The effect of science upon our views of man’s place in the universe has been of two opposite kinds; it has at once degraded and exalted him. It has degraded him from the stand point of contemplation, and exalted him from that of action”.

Bertrand Russel made this point some time in the late forties. The point made here is a more extreme one but then, this point is being made well over forty years after Bertrand Russel. And a lot has happened since then.

The greater the distancing of the individual from society, the greater is the danger of science and technology charting out perhaps a wayward path, unrelated to the larger good. And this path, science and technology will pretend to chart out for him and he will fall a prey to it thinking that that is the path absolutely tailored for his needs and his trends of thinking, leaving the society out of the calculation. This would be most unfortunate. We should never be able to forgive ourselves if we cannot exploit the limitless potentialities offered by science and technology for the good of those who have hitherto found themselves on the fringes of human existence.

There is a very real danger of science becoming autonomous of the social purpose. A dramatic example, though an extreme one, is the arms race which has, in no small measure, been fuelled by scientific advancement. It has led to a situation where “smart” bombs are becoming increasingly “intelligent”, one stage of

weapons development is leading to another, almost in self-perpetuating motion. Jawaharlal Nehru as far back as in 1947, speaking at the thirty-fourth Session of the Indian Science Congress at Delhi said: "Surely, science is not the individual's search for truth... Its objective must be to remove the ills of the community. It must have a social objective before it...."

We must ensure that science and technology are applied for the good of the individual and society. I am not making this point in the abstract. I am talking in terms of the higher reaches of scientific research, as well as what science and technology can do for our villages—taking the Indian example—for that individual who resides in the remotest of remote of our hamlets. This is important if science is to grow with its roots in the social reality. It must sustain itself on the hopes and aspirations of the people. Only then can science retain its perspective. The question is, how do we make this happen?

A couple of months back when I spoke to the members of the scientific community I shared with them an experience, my own experience, which I would also like to share with you now. There is in my village a small tank which overflows when there is excess of rain, but when the rains cease, the soil is so porous that the water drains off rapidly and very little storage is possible. The result is that no crop can be grown while the rain is pouring and thereafter just when the crop needs water, there is no stored water available for it. We want to know how to use this water when it is available in excess and what crop we can raise when there is very little of it to go around. As I mentioned to my scientist friends, I have been asking this question for over 25 years now and haven't got an answer. I think there are villagers in India, in developing countries the world over who are asking similar questions and waiting for the answers. And this is the challenge to the twenty-first century because these questions are not going to be answered within the next eight or ten years. We may have to go on posing this question to ourselves and to the scientists and the landless of the society may have to go on trying to get the answer for them.

The crux of the matter is that we cannot afford to lose our moorings. Whether it is the individual, whether it is science and technology, it can be no one's case that the ideal state of being is in the manner of a rudderless ship! The question of being able to identify oneself with the social reality depends in no small measure on the feel which an individual has of his culture and heritage, of history, of his very roots. Maybe not all of us can gain an insight into these matters in sophisticated terms. But surely all of us can

atleast appreciate the essence through the folklore, a pageant or the village bard. In fact people in our villages feel this much more than those who call themselves more advanced. They are a part of the tradition much more naturally than we sometimes imagine. Religion and culture can at times be divisive when they become tools in the hands of those who seek to manipulate. But more often than not the influence of culture and religion is a soothing one, even a sobering one which brings us back to reality, to the social reality. In any event, it is impossible to think of culture and religion centered only in the individuals completely isolated from other individuals, in other words, from society. That is why a return to the social phenomenon comes as a corrective to excessive individualism. I imagine it happened when the Buddha appeared and we had the three stages of:

Buddham sharnam gachchami

Dharmam sharnam gachchami

Sangham sharnam gachchami

Thus making the Sangha, Society, the culmination in this perpetual quest.

When we thus arrive at society as the culminating point in human endeavour, it follows that our ultimate target can be nothing short of the whole of humankind. And since humans alone cannot survive without the other species, the target extends to the universe, the whole of Creation. That brings into bold relief the inveterate genius of the Creator, whoever He was howsoever humans have imagined Him down the ages.

The challenge of the twenty-first century seems to be, simply, to ensure that a set of creatures—humans, do not sabotage the good job done by the Creator!

M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar

WHEN I STAND in the Central Hall of Parliament, I am filled with a feeling of awe and reverence; 'awe' because it is within these sacred portals that so much of our history had been made; 'reverence' because a very large share in the making of this history

Speech while unveiling the portrait of Ananthasayanam Ayyangar in the Central Hall of Parliament House, 9 December 1991

goes to our distinguished parliamentarians, many of whose portraits adorn this Chamber.

The vision of our great leaders and parliamentarians, their indefatigable labours, their passion to build India and the vision of those who gave up their best years of their lives so that we could be free, pervade this August Chamber; and, they give us the strength to go in our endeavours to build a strong India, a just India, a prosperous India and India, where the benefits of progress go to all, particularly the weaker sections, and India firmly rooted in our individual freedom and human dignity plus collective endeavour. It is indeed befitting that the portrait of Shri Ananthasayanam Ayyangar should join the portraits of those whom the country owes so much.

A worthy successor to the legendary Dadasaheb Mavalankar, Shri Ananthasayanam Ayyangar add lustre to the office of the Speaker and left an indelible imprint upon our parliamentary and national life. He brought with him to the office of the Speaker a deep knowledge of parliamentary norms, the truth and all that was normal in public life and also a tremendous sense of humour which not only enlivened parliamentary proceedings but also, at times, enabled Shri Ayyangar to make a point more forcefully and what is more important, more pleasantly. Even today, we can with profit delve into his pronouncements, interventions and rulings on subjects as diverse as adjournment motions, amendments, bills, the role of the chair, parliamentary conventions, points of order and a whole host of other matters, and of it emerge as better democrats, better patriots and better human beings.

I remember reading an interesting anecdote about Shri Ayyangar. During his Central Legislative Assembly days, he was likened to a German submarine which terrorised the British. The point of a comparison among other things, was ability to speak at a tremendously fast pace. I understand that he spoke at almost 180 words per minute. In course, such a flurry of words should have been as daunting to the listener as to the speaker. But when words bring together wisdom and wit, they afford the listener a rare pleasure and posterity a chance to ponder on matters which are of crucial importance to the development of individual institutions, society and the nation.

Today, when we are in a critical juncture in our history we realise more than ever, the crucial role which Parliament is called upon to play in a time of crisis. Parliament's responsibility is onerous all the time but more so in times of difficulty. Nation, the people, look to their representatives to give them the lead and show a way to a securer and brighter future.

We are today faced with a fast changing and challenging global situation both within the country and internationally. It is, to say the least, quite daunting. At the same time, the expectations of the people are also on the rise. Even while we are engaged in the task of nation-building, we are faced with secessionism and terrorism. The call of the hour is unity. We must stand together as one to meet the difficulties of the present and uncertainties of the future. More than ever, we look to Parliament as a focal point of our single-mindedness of purpose; to contend with these challenges and give to our people a better future. Parliament must be binding force to bring our people together and their resolve to build a stronger and more prosperous India. I am reminded in this context of Shri Ayyangar's very perceptive words on the role of parliamentarians. In his inaugural address to the twenty-fifth conference of the presiding officers of Legislative bodies, he said :

In my view, they (meaning the Members of Parliament) ought to function as a two-way channel of communication between the people and the Government. It is not enough for them merely to voice the interest and reactions of their constituencies. They have also to go back and interpret the policies and measures of Government to the people so that they know what is happening around them and feel a sense and partnership in the administration of the country.

However, difficult be the time that we face today, I have no doubt that we shall emerge successful.

I have great faith in our people and in our democratic institutions which have flourished due to perceptive maturity which the people of India have in abundance, whether it is in the institution-building, whether it is in the creative sphere, whether it is in the science or giving to the people a better quality of life, India will emerge successful and be in the front ranks of the comity of nations. We have a long and rich history. We have the wisdom of the sages. Our people have been endowed with an intellectual creativity, the envy of many. We must put all these to good use and work together as one for a purpose which transcends our individual selves for a larger purpose, the social purpose, the national purpose. Only if we transcend our mere individual selves and narrow petty ends, as distinct from their lofty ideals, we will be able to achieve the democratic purpose. Among these stalwarts, stalwarts who inspired the nation to these ideals, was Shri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar.

On a personal note, I must say I was very junior to him. But, I was one of those who profited greatly from his wisdom and from his company occasionally. One very significant factor, significant

incident, I would like to relate here which has left a permanent impress on my mind about his catholicity. You know he was a great Vishishtadwaita Scholar. It so happened that we decided, on behalf of the Congress Party, a candidate for the Tirupathi Assembly Constituency in the 1972 election. He was a very good candidate, young candidate and President of the Students' Union of the University and we went by that. Suddenly, after everything was decided, it was discovered that he was a Christian. Now, you can imagine what consternation could have happened in the very citadel of Vishishtadwaita when the Congress candidate happened to be a Christian? Everybody said he was going to be defeated. I went to Indiraji and told her. She said, "You go to one person and he will help you and that is Shri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar." I promptly went to him and he said, "Oh has this happened? I will help you." I still remember the way he called the people from almost every village and, of course, from Tirupathi and harangued them. Other Vishishtadwaita scholars—his own colleagues, his disciples, may be some of them were even contemporaries—argued with him; they protested. But he said, "NO. If I want you to vote for the Congress this time, it is because there is a Christian candidate here. This should be the reason, this should be the proof of your secularism and this secularism is ingrained in Vishishtadwaita." He linked Vishishtadwaita with secularism and he got this boy elected by fifteen thousand votes in the Assembly Constituency.

In fact, the most important issue before us today is whether we can mobilise all we have and work together as one in unity to move purposefully into the future and while we are doing this, while we are achieving this through the only Parliament that we have, the one and the only Parliament of which we are all proud, Shri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar comes to my mind again and again. I am happy to be able to speak on this occasion and to see that his portrait is being unveiled.

People's Involvement in Nation-Building

I WELCOME YOU all to this forty-third meeting of the National Development Council. This Council is meeting after more than a year. The past couple of years have witnessed many significant events, both within the country and outside. We have faced critical moments in our domestic economic situation. There have been strains in our Balance of Payments position, a perilous decline in our foreign exchange reserves, and severe fiscal imbalances. Governments have changed. This period has also seen historic and momentous trends emerging in the world. These changes have had repercussions on the finalisation of our Eighth Five Year Plan. The Plan which was due to start in April 1990, will now commence from 1 April 1992.

We have initiated a series of policy measures to revitalise the economy. These include correction of fiscal imbalances, a downward adjustment of the external value of the rupee, radical changes in the trade policy, the announcement of the new industrial policy, and concrete steps to make the public sector industry efficient and surplus-generating. We are confident that these policies will make a significant impact on the economy, though it may take some time before the impact becomes visible. These policy measures will also have a bearing on the Government's priorities and programmes. All this has necessitated a fresh look at the considerable preparatory work which had already been done for the Eighth Plan and the recasting of the Plan. I am happy to say that the Planning Commission has prepared the Macro-economic Directional Paper, which is before you, well in time, fully taking into account the imperatives of development and the constraints imposed by the present economic situation.

A question which is being debated now is : What would be the role of planning in the new context? My emphatic answer is that planning will continue to have a critical role in the social, human and economic development of our country. The concept of development as perceived by our founding fathers at the very beginning of the era of planning still holds good. The First Five Year Plan had rightly emphasised that, and I quote:

Economic condition of a country at any given time is a product of a wider process aiming not merely at the development of resources in a narrow technical sense, but at the development of human faculties and the building up of an institutional framework adequate to the needs and aspirations of the people.

I do not think we can add much to this. But it is to be admitted that what has been done so far falls short of the needs, particularly in the development of human resource and in the building up of an institutional framework adequate to the needs and aspirations of our people. These will have to receive priority attention in the Eighth Plan as also the priorities listed out in the Macro-economic Directional Paper.

The role of Planning in future, will largely be to facilitate this development. India has a mixture of planning through detailed targeting as well as indicative planning. Planning for sectors where public enterprises were dominant (steel, petrochemicals, railways, for example), followed detailed working out of investment and production targets. Planning for the private sector has been wholly indicative. It is now time to enlarge the area of indicative planning, sharpen our tools and methods, and pay more attention to building up a long-term strategic vision of the future. This calls for a reorientation of the role of the Planning Commission. The paper before you contains ideas to this effect.

An important corollary to more effective planning and its implementation is decentralisation and micro-level planning. We will have to move fast in this area, encouraging and facilitating the development of an appropriate institutional infrastructure which can aid and assist in this great task of development through active people's involvement.

The Directional Paper lays down the objectives, the thrusts and the strategy of the Eighth Five Year Plan. It calls for a re-examination and reorientation of the role of the Government. It is essential to fully involve the people in the process of nation-building. The main task is to ensure that real initiative is transferred to the people. At the same time, the State has to play an active role in protecting the interests of the poor and the neglected in addition to the Public Sector on which this function is enjoined. I have no doubt that the Private Sector, which will register expansion hereafter, should keep this objective firmly in view. In this respect, there could be no differentiation or dichotomy.

Looking ahead, my vision of the year 2000 is that poverty would be almost completely eliminated and conditions of near full employment would prevail. Basic needs in respect of food, drinking

water, clothing, universal elementary education, adult literacy, and access to health facilities will be provided for. These will be a marked improvement in living standards for all. Women will have equal status. Life expectancy will increase to well over sixty years, and infant mortality will decline steeply.

Our foremost objective today is to generate adequate employment. This is the precondition for eradication of poverty. But this will be possible only when the young men and women in the age of employment are imparted the skills and competence which make them employable. In other words, educational pyramid should be so planned that within the Eighth Plan every child is ensured schooling up to levels where employability is acquired. The base of the pyramid i.e. the elementary, should be fully covered while the middle and higher levels are enabled to impart technical and managerial levels commensurate with market requirements, ensuring in the process, a full array of competences for self-employment to serve the expanding needs of the society. Illiteracy should be eradicated in the next five years in the age group of 15 to 35 years.

Along with this, universal coverage of all villages in fulfilling the basic needs of drinking water and primary health care facilities, including immunisation, has to be achieved within this plan period. Scavenging should be eliminated in the next five years. Every family must be enabled to acquire the capacity to fulfil its basic nutritional requirements.

This has to be achieved keeping the hard fact in view that nearly seven crores of persons would have been added to the labour force by the turn of the century. An effective population policy therefore becomes an urgent necessity in our planning strategy. This is a challenging task. But if all of us accept this national commitment, the country should be able to achieve the goal of a balanced population growth. This issue has been included as an agenda item for this meeting. A conference of Health Ministers of States is also being convened shortly to discuss the Draft Action Plan on the subject.

For this purpose, the co-operation of grass root level institutions is very essential. I want the Chief Ministers to evolve a mechanism for this. You can find ways of involvement of the State Governments, Zilla Parishads and Panchayats, besides, each State can evolve, if necessary, some special parameters to be programmed to suit its conditions, in addition to the general approach. I would also like to add that this programme should not be treated as the Centre's responsibility alone. An integrated approach to family welfare specially at the village level, is needed. While the

programme has to be implemented directly, proper implementation of every other programme relevant to it like literacy, immunisation, health and nutrition education etc. should also be vigorously carried out. We may think of a method whereby the village as a whole gets additional benefits as incentive for its performance in family welfare. I appeal to the Chief Ministers to generate new ideas for dealing with this challenge. I would like the Planning Commission and Central Government to appreciate and accept all useful suggestions of the State Governments and of those actively engaged in the programme at the field level.

Much of what we are targeting in the area of human development will require that a high growth rate of income be achieved as early as possible. This requires considerable strengthening of infrastructure—energy, transport, communication and irrigation. The Eighth Plan will focus on these objectives keeping in view the need for continued reliance on domestic resources for financing investment, increasing the capabilities for the development of science and technology, modernisation and competitive efficiency. I am confident that the policy framework we have in mind, the Indian economy can keep pace with and take advantage of global developments.

In the preparation of the Plan, sectors meant for intensive investments on a priority basis will be identified. This will facilitate the policy initiatives taken in the areas of fiscal, trade and industrial sectors and in human development. However, along with investment, effective utilisation of resources also needs to be ensured. Resources are limited but whatever is feasible must reach those who need it most.

In the formulation of the Plan I would request the Chief Ministers to appreciate certain basic aspects of national concern impinging on the future of this country. The planning process is not to be seen as an exercise imposed or directed from the Centre. It is a process in which the Centre and the States are partners. The national priorities must be determined together. The methodology of effective and fruitful involvement of the people at the grass roots level must be formulated together, with the major initiative coming from the State. Raising resources also demands the same approach. We have to identify, together, the hitherto uncapped potential for resources mobilisation. An area where the States and the Centre converge is the speedy completion of on-going externally aided projects in various States. It is unfortunate that even in the present situation of severe strain on our balance of payment, a large amount of committed external aid has remained unutilised due to unusually long delays in the execution of projects. Further, the enormous

potential for export in our agriculture sector is waiting to be tapped. There are several areas, where, if the Centre and the States apply their minds jointly, innovative schemes for mobilisation of resources can emerge.

Keeping in view the objectives, and weighing carefully our strengths and weaknesses, it is proposed that the Eighth Plan maintains the pace of growth which was achieved during the Seventh Plan i.e., a rate of 5.6 per cent per annum in terms of GDP, involving a public sector investment of Rs. 342,000 crores (at 1991-92 prices) over the next five years and a public sector outlay of Rs.400,000 crores. The realisation of the projected investment calls for a determined effort on the part of the Enterprises and Government to save more. It particularly demands efforts to reverse the negative trend of Government savings at the Centre and in the States. This task demands improved fiscal management by the States and the Centre, implying an increase in revenue and containment of expenditure, rationalisation of subsidies and appropriate pricing of services provided by the Government.

Concerted efforts are needed to check inflation, which hurts the poor more, and distorts the economic outlook of households and businesses. We have been concerned with the high rate of inflation. With the recent measures taken we hope to stabilise the prices of essential commodities in the near future. I seek your earnest co-operation in streamlining the Public Distribution System, and showing firmness in dealing with hoarders and black-marketeers.

We have many challenging tasks ahead. We have initiated economic reforms to put the country on a more sustainable and stable course of development. We have full confidence in the strength and the resilience of our system and in the capacity of our people to stand up to challenges. I am optimistic that the proposed goals would be realized. I commend the proposals in the Directional Paper of the Eighth Five Year Plan for the consideration of this august body.

The agenda also includes, for your consideration, an item on the principles of distribution of Central assistance among the States. This was considered by the National Development Council in October 1990. Since then, Chief Ministers of several States have expressed their views and reservations on the formula announced at the last meeting. Taking all concerns into considerations the Planning Commission has proposed a formulation which appears to balance the objectives of equity, progressiveness and efficiency. Under the new formula, it will be ensured that no State loses more than 10 per cent and no State gains more than 20 per cent.

In keeping with our emphasis on decentralisation, we are proposing to transfer some of the centrally sponsored schemes to the States. This is only a beginning, and in course of time I expect that it will be found feasible to make over more of these tasks and responsibilities to the States. I commend this also for your consideration.

Fostering Secular Outlook

I HAVE GREAT pleasure in welcoming you all to this Second Meeting of reconstituted National Integration Council.

We met recently on the second of November this year. At that time, I had drawn attention to the importance of this Council as a forum to discuss sensitive national issues dispassionately and evolve a national consensus. In response to the suggestion made by many members, I had agreed that the next meeting of the NIC would be held soon to discuss specifically the situation in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab. Hence, this meeting.

In pursuance of the decision taken in the last meeting of the NIC, I have constituted a Standing Committee under the Chairmanship of the Home Minister. The Committee will meet at short notice to discuss matters of important and urgent nature and will make necessary recommendations to the Government or the NIC. The Committee will also review action on decisions of the NIC.

The law and order situation in the country continues to cause concern. We are confronted with the challenges posed by divisive and secessionist forces in the country. Terrorism and militancy have not only continued unabated but have spread. Terrorists and militant groups have been trying to establish footholds in new areas. The brutality of terrorists has taken many innocent lives. The recent killing of innocent train passengers in Ludhiana is one of many such examples. There are groups which are wedded to the creed of violence. This creed of violence is wholly opposed to the tenets of a modern civilised society and our own ancient traditions of tolerance, brotherhood and non-violence. There is an

urgent need to ponder seriously on this issue. We must fight the divisive and secessionist forces unitedly, firmly and with determination.

In recent months, Government have taken a number of initiatives for dealing with the situation in Kashmir and Punjab. Some of the measures taken by us have yielded tangible results. We are encouraged by the response of most parties to our initiatives, and we hope that all parties will come forward and give us their constructive and whole hearted co-operation. All of us would have to be careful to see that nothing is done which can jeopardise our united efforts to create a better environment for resolving national problems. Therefore, even when the objective of a particular programme may be quite laudable, it would have to be undertaken in a manner which will not give rise to any unnecessary fears or misgivings in the minds of the people.

The distinguishing features of our society have been the spirit of tolerance and respect for the rights of others to practise and propagate their faith. In the context of the distressing communal situation in recent times, we must make special efforts to foster a secular outlook, and generate a feeling of brotherhood, amity and goodwill. The nation cannot afford anything that will exacerbate the existing social tensions. I am sure all political parties will display the required sense of responsibility and maturity in this critical period.

The secessionist and terrorist activities in Kashmir and Punjab are the gravest challenges to the security, unity and integrity of the nation since independence. In Kashmir, the number of terrorist incidents has shown a distinct increase. Attacks on the security forces and spate of abductions are causing us concern. The terrorist groups have been using better and better weapons and a large number of our valiant security personnel have lost their lives. The militants have indiscriminately attacked ordinary and innocent people. The vernacular press is now entirely in the hands of militants. Due to the terror let loose by them, thousands of families have fled the valley and have become homeless refugees in their own country. We now have reports of some Muslim families also, apart from Hindus who had come earlier, having left the valley due to the unsettled conditions.

The involvement of a foreign hand in the secessionist activities is quite evident and is clearly reflected among other things in the training of terrorists and supply of arms to them and in the propaganda blitz let loose both in the valley and abroad. In fact, I think the time has come when we dispense with this word 'foreign

hand'. It is not just the 'hand' it is totally State-sponsored terrorism being carried on from across the border. There is hardly any doubt about it. I think we could simply do away with this 'foreign hand'. I would say there is nothing like a 'hand' there, it is a whole Government.

The difference between the terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab on the one hand and the terrorist activities in the other States is distinctly this: in other States the reasons for terrorism may be local, may be ideological, may be party, political, whatever you may want to describe them as. But in these two States it is blatant State-sponsored terrorism and our approach to these two types of terrorism will necessarily have to be different. We are facing what might be called a 'proxy war' being waged and guided from across the border. Despite difficult circumstances, our security forces have achieved notable success. In the past two months, they have launched major offensives which have resulted in creating a positive impact on improving the security situation. There are indications that the common man in the valley is no longer reconciled to the prolonged dislocation of his social and economic life. The livelihood of many ordinary people has been severely affected. The tourist industry upon which the State is so heavily dependent has received a serious setback.

The Government has a deep commitment to human rights. I would like to assure you that the Government will promptly enquire into all allegations of excesses against the security forces and take firm action against those found guilty. But we must remember that wild and totally false allegations are being orchestrated against the security forces by the terrorist organisations and their supporters abroad in an attempt to demoralise the security forces and sap their courage and determination to resist the terrorists. In this country, it appears that no one except the terrorist has any human rights. All the rights are available only to the terrorists, only to the killers, not to the ordinary people, not to those who have been killed by them. No one has talked about the human rights of those who were massacred in the train the other day. Look at the thundering silence that you find on this matter. Why could anyone not say that even these people who have lost their lives should have been spared. Even this much has not been said by any of these champions of human rights. This is the irony of the whole thing. This deliberate slander campaign will have to be exposed by placing the correct facts before the people.

The Government has also tried to associate the people in the process of governance. A useful meeting was recently held with the leaders of political parties and eminent personalities of Jammu

and Kashmir in an effort to revive normal political activity. We shall continue this process to build people's confidence. Restoration of full political activity in the State will continue to be our goal.

Article 370 of the Constitution is often criticised on the ground that it restricts the application of the provisions of the Constitution of India to the State of Jammu and Kashmir and that it gives special rights to the permanent residents of the State in respect of employment and acquisition of property. In this regard, I would like to remind you about the history and special circumstances under which this Article was incorporated in our Constitution. We cannot now go back on the assurance given to the people of Jammu and Kashmir at the time of merger of that State with India. Keeping in view the changing needs and requirements, a number of provisions of the Constitution have since been made applicable to the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Moreover, Article 370 is not the only special provision in our Constitution. To deal with the special problems of other States many provisions exist in our Constitution in Article 371 and in Articles 371 A to 371 H.

Like Jammu and Kashmir, the State of Punjab is also disturbed by terrorist violence. In the last two years this violence has increased significantly. In a bid to demoralise the security forces, their families and relatives are being specifically targeted. A concerted effort is being made to disrupt or subvert the normal functioning of social and other institutions, such as banks, courts, administrative departments and schools by issuing fundamentalist and sectarian dictates and by trying to enforce these dictates through terror and killings.

Government is determined to foil the subversive aims of the terrorists. To help maintain law and order and protect the life and property of citizens, the Paramilitary presence in the State has been augmented. The army has also been inducted into Punjab to aid and assist the civil administration in maintaining law and order. The beneficial effect of this move is clear from reduced terrorist attacks in the past two months. There are fears that the Army will be withdrawn from Punjab after the elections and this will lead to reprisals. I want to stress that the army will continue to stay in Punjab as long as it is considered necessary. To reduce clandestine movement of weapons and terrorists from across the border, a number of measures have been taken for strengthening the border management.

I may also add at this point that since we have announced elections in Punjab we should expect, in fact we should in the normal circumstances or in the abnormal circumstances in which we find the State expect some spurt in violence in the coming

weeks because of the determined effort of the other side, meaning on the other side of the international border; they are determined to see that these elections are disrupted. The moment a popular Government comes in Punjab, all that they have been doing to build up this anti-Indian phenomenon there will collapse. They would not like to see that happen and there will be a revolt on their hands because they have been promising to these young people, misguided people many things. The very young people will turn around and say "Where is it? Where is your promise? What has happened to that promise?" So, they do not want elections and, therefore, elections in Punjab are not merely a continuation of the normal democratic activity in this country but at this particular moment it is something like a challenge, a special challenge, thrown at us and the people of India, the Government of India, all the political parties will have to take up that challenge with the same amount of determination and foil this attempt which is being made from the other side.

The accord between Rajivji and Sant Longowal had aroused high expectations and generated lot of goodwill in Punjab. Unfortunately, in the last four to five years, implementation of this accord was not given the priority attention that was required. Conditions in Punjab also did not make it possible to push through the accord. We are committed to the full implementation of the Rajiv-Longowal accord, and view this as an important step in finding an acceptable solution to the Punjab problem. We do recognise that this would require the building up of a conducive environment.

In this context, we have initiated a series of steps for revising the political process. Home Minister has held useful discussions with various political leaders. I am glad that there exists a high degree of consensus amongst the leaders and political parties on this question. Both the Home Minister and I have reiterated our firm resolve to hold elections in Punjab by 15 February next year. Some friends have come to me and said, "Why don't you put off these elections by a month or two months or three months?" Now, I have respectfully told them and I stick to that view that any further announcement of a postponement will reduce the credibility of the Government of India to zero. I don't think we can take that risk and once this credibility is gone, then there is nothing you can do about it later and in effect the activities of terrorists will get a shot in the arm. That should not be allowed to happen. Whatever the difficulty, I have been telling the Governor, telling everyone that this is a test, this is a challenge and we have to take it up as a challenge and not as a normal election. So, this is the speciality of this election and there should be no further doubt about our sticking to the time schedule.

We recognise that terrorist and militant activity cannot be contained only through effective police and army action. To eliminate terrorism and militancy altogether, we must simultaneously take action on several other fronts. I have already spoken to you of the efforts being made to revive political activity. We are also trying to ensure that the developmental activities are vigorously pursued. I would like to assure the honourable Members that where necessary, special Central assistance will be given to both Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir; so that the pace of development does not slow down. Special programmes will be drawn to absorb the unemployed youth in these States in productive work so that they do not succumb to the false propaganda of the terrorist and militant groups.

I look forward to the discussion in today's meeting. I expect that as always, this august body will come forward with valuable suggestions and will help create an environment conducive to finding long term solutions.

The year 1991 has been a troublesome and disturbed one for our country. As we meet on the last day of this year, I am sure you will all join me in wishing that with the New Year we will enter a period of peace and cheer for the nation, a period that will see India grow from strength to strength as a united, strong, prosperous and vibrant country.

Our Maritime Heritage

I AM INDEED happy to be here this evening on the occasion of the inauguration of the Maritime Heritage Gallery in the National Museum.

India has a rich and ancient history as a maritime nation. Throughout the ages its people have sailed the oceans to distant lands both in the East and the West, engaged in commerce, in the exchange of ideas and of cultures. The flotillas of the maritime in terms of peninsular India did not embark on expeditions of conquest but established bridges of peaceful interaction with peoples in different parts of the world. India's rich and varied culture today

Speech at the inauguration of Maritime Heritage Gallery, New Delhi, 6 January 1992

owes much to its maritime legacy just as the cultures of the South-East Asia and West Asia echo with the myriad sounds and reflect the different shades of Indian culture.

I may add here that in the history of the South Indian literatures you have a lot of material to show conclusively that the kingdoms, say until three hundred years ago, may be 250 years ago, even small kingdoms, had a strong presence on their shores and the *Prabandha kavyas* of those days give you long descriptions of what was brought by businessmen of that kingdom under that particular king, the kind of things they brought from outside, how the kingdoms flourished by these commercial deals with other countries. Very long descriptions of these would not have been possible unless they were rooted in truth. In other languages where this culture is not there, you do not find these descriptions. That is where literature gives you a very clear idea of the condition of the society which the literary person, a poet or a writer, describes. So, I have no doubt about our maritime legacy after reading quite a lot of these *kavyas* including in Sanskrit where elaborate descriptions are given. So, we have a very long history of maritime presence, businessmen going across the seas.

The first time I found any museum describing the Indian connection was not in India but in Bahrain. That was in early eighties when I went there as Foreign Minister and they said one of the things to be seen there was the Maritime Museum. I spent two and a half hours, the whole morning there. Every connection that they showed was through India. All the sea routes criss-crossing over that area passed through India naturally. It is then that I realised, apart from the literary study, how much historical material was there in other countries but regrettably not in India itself. It is good that two exhibitions started in Cochin and Visakhapatnam during 1987-88 and I am sure this was a need which had been fulfilled. I hope more and more of our younger generation are made aware of the importance of India in this particular aspect.

Pandit Nehru wrote extensively about this aspect. There is hardly anything which he wrote without touching this aspect of India's greatness through history. You get long passages again and it is really an experience to be transported to those days of India's glory. Much of India's glory was said to be in its arts, in its crafts, in its commercial process across the seas and in its philosophy. It was not anything that you could consider great in the idiom of today but what India was great in is something which is permanent; that greatness endures here in this country and that is what really everyone agrees. Go to any university in any other country, they will talk of ancient India. Sometimes we get irritated; we have all

these things, big factories and other things, why don't they talk of Sindri fertiliser factory or something, why do they talk of things which are 2000 years old. I asked one of them "You don't seem to think that there has been any India after 1947." He was a scholar not a diplomat, so he was a little more candid. So, he said "What is there in India after 1947. You have exactly what we have here and that is what you have been doing." That was an eye-opener to me, to know what these people, people who don't talk but who think, think of India. They are always having the greatest veneration for India for what happened in olden times. About what is happening in modern India, I don't see much of a respect there. That is because of the fact that perhaps we have lost our own moorings. The moment you bring back our moorings you will find that the respect will come back.

They respect Panditji. They respect Gandhiji. They don't respect anyone who tries to ape them, imitate them, take their lifestyles and make them their own. They may be happy that their lifestyles are being accepted by, just as the original is happy to see that there are copies of it. But real respect comes for the real Indianness. That is where perhaps we have to do a little heart searching not only in knowing our own history, our own heritage, our own culture, not so much because there is no other heritage as good as this but because it is what is called 'Vishwadharmā', it is yours; if you don't respect it, there is no reason why anyone else should respect it.

I went to Soviet Russia many times and again from one of those scholars who are very tactless sometimes I got a deep insight into the languages. I went to the People's Publishing House. They specialise in translating all Indian language books into Russian. Now, we have also done a lot of translation from Russian—Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky and so on—in many Indian languages. Over a period of time I found that the volume was diminishing. Then, on one of my visits I asked this gentleman why is it that the volume is diminishing, why is it that the number of books translated into Russian is coming down steadily, rather steeply. He hummed and hawed and was not prepared to come out with the truth. But I pressed him anyway and he said, "Why should we care for your languages when you don't care for them. You are adopting English very fast, so why don't we make use of English; why do I go in for fourteen languages instead of one and our children are learning English in any case. So why do we waste our money, energy and everything in going to India, studying Indian languages, getting Indian scholars here, one Russian scholar, one Indian scholar for translations to be made accurate. You don't have to go to that length. Now, we have a common language, you are developing it.

you have taken it up.” I am not against English or adopting English; I want to tell you how others see. So we have to have respect for our heritage, only then others will have respect for us and our heritage. Sometimes they may have respect for our heritage, they do, I am not sure they have respect for us. This is the difficulty.

I am very glad that Admiral Ramdas asked me, in fact, pressed me several times to come here. We have to have more of these things to just remind ourselves of our past. Even we do not know what it is and when it comes to knowledge about our own heritage, I don't think we score very high marks in that. So, I think it is good that we have started this. Let children, let young students know about it, do some research. Some of them will be tempted, will be interested in going a little deep and finding out what exactly happened and how it happened. Really, I tell you when we read some of those poems, some of those writings you do forget yourselves and you tend to live in the past and perhaps feel proud of what this nation had been.

Revolution Must Come from the People

I FEEL TODAY as if a lifetime's devoted work is being rewarded. Since long we have been trying to honour Govindbhai and thereby honour ourselves. In honouring Govindbhai we are not doing any favour to anyone. Actually we are doing it for our own satisfaction. He has many qualities one of which is obstinacy. For years we have been requesting him to accept this honour but he would not agree. We failed to understand what objection he could have if we desired to honour an old colleague who fully deserved it. We carried on this argument with him for long. Now he has agreed and we are grateful to him that we are given this opportunity to fulfil a duty. We deem it as our good fortune.

On an occasion like this we remember Swamiji who had brought all of us from three different provinces and united us under one banner without any distinction among us. We worked together like a team. We had only one goal and we marched towards it. We

English rendering of the speech in Hindi at the Platinum Jubilee celebrations of Shri Govindbhai Shroff, Aurangabad, 18 January 1992

recall today those days, we recall our association with Swamiji, how under his guidance we went forward, how we faltered sometimes but regained our strength and stood up firm again, firm on our feet. All that history comes before our mind today. I would not go into all that but I feel it is essential to recall that in the freedom struggle in Hyderabad, we were conscious of a longer vision, a goal beyond the freedom struggle. There was an effort to visualise the scenario after the goal of freedom was achieved. I have always looked upon that struggle as “freedom struggle plus” during which we kept on discussing with one another as to what the shape of the future would be.

All of us who worked with Swamiji have been left with an impression which has not vanished despite the changing circumstances. Due to it we have been able to go forward and our thoughts and programmes have been taken forward. I wish to assure you that the deep impression left on us by Swamiji will never be obliterated. Govindbhai was with us in that march but there were others too. Some of them parted ways in their political careers and that was only to be expected. The context in which we were working in Hyderabad changed after the attainment of freedom. Hyderabad (State) was divided and we merged our identities with other entities. It was natural for us to change but even in this change we never lost sight of our goal.

It is my endeavour today to ensure that there is no politics in the service of the people. Of course, we fight elections and on the basis of political parties governments are formed. Even in the task of serving the people, there can be some politics but not entirely so. We must not ignore the development of the country and the people. Wherever I go I emphasise the point that if we play politics beyond a certain point the people would be left behind in the race for progress and the country would remain undeveloped, the money earmarked for development would not reach the people. We have to think and rise above politics and think of development and what role different parties have to play in that task. The goal must be always before us. I have said again and again that I would like to be remembered as the Prime Minister for development.

While working with Govindbhai we have learnt that it is not necessary or desirable to draw up a programme and force it down the throats of the people. Some fifteen or twenty years ago Total Revolution was hotly discussed and there was much tension, there was considerable party politics at that time and many people had strong views. I do not know if Govindbhai would remember it now, but at that time I had asked him what he meant by Total Revolution. I wanted a written note and within a week he sent

me a neatly typed note, a comprehensive note. I have studied it carefully. It is essential to understand the goal and the methodology we employ if we wish to accomplish our stated objective. I have always agreed with him and will agree in future also that the Revolution must come from the people, it must not be imposed on them. My slogan is not, "We are operating, you co-operate with us". My slogan is "You are operating, tell us how we can co-operate with you." It is not the government which operates, neither the government in Delhi, nor the one in Bombay or in Hyderabad. We in the government can give you only a helping hand. Nobody has any idea of the immeasurable strength of the people. The government does not possess that strength. Whatever strength the government has it is also given by the people. We can only think about ways of awakening that (people's) strength, of activating it.

So many of our programmes have erred in the belief that they are Government's programmes and the people must co-operate in implementing them. This is totally wrong because what the people have in their minds will not be reflected in these programmes. They would remain only governmental programmes and would not reach the people, as so many of our programmes have failed to do.

Recently, on 1 January, we in the government launched a programme for revamping the Public Distribution System, PDS, with the objective of reaching essential commodities like foodgrains and four or five articles of daily use at fair prices to the people in the backward areas, like desert areas, hill and tribal and other remote areas. The scheme was launched but how can we ensure that the goods really reach the people? Thousands of crores of rupees have been allocated for the programme and who is going to look after it? Do you know if the fair price shops in the villages receive the essential articles at all? Or are they being sold off at the block or district level and the officials return with the money to their offices? There is nothing new in this. Whether the Prime Minister says so or someone else says it, the truth is that the distribution is not above fault.

We have to ensure that the essential articles are sold in the fair price shops in the remote areas. I am personally looking after this shopkeeping work. I have kept this portfolio with myself. How can I watch from Delhi whether the goods reach the shops in those areas? How can this work of monitoring be done effectively unless the people co-operate with us, unless the small watchdog committees at the local level, with a number of women members, monitor the distribution? Otherwise the funds allocated from Delhi will be wasted.

Development does not involve big things. It consists of many small things. If we pay attention to those things we will accomplish the big things also. If we ignore the small things, the nation will not make progress simply by talking big and giving lectures on big things. I believe that while we must watch the progress of the big projects and take action where irregularities are noticed, we must ensure that local arrangements at the panchayat or any other people's level, are made in order that the programmes benefit the poorest of poor for whom they are really meant. I am looking into the problem of making this system perfect and removing any defects in it. Here we need the help of workers of different political parties and we need their leadership at the local level. We would like them to act as our eyes. Delhi is not our eyes; crores of people in the villages are our eyes and when these are kept open we will get light and see things for ourselves, not otherwise.

Take the matter of concessions for the people who are below the line of poverty. Nobody has actually drawn such a line but we have conception that those below a certain income will be treated as below the poverty line. We have special concessions for those below the poverty line but if all people including those above the line also register themselves for the benefits, the strong and influential people who are not actually poor will run away with the concessions. The weak for whom the benefits are meant will be left behind. How do I know who in a particular village is below the line and who is above it unless someone gets up and comes forward to tell the government about it. I will accept a list prepared by you. But if you do not provide the government with such a list and are guided by personal considerations that such and such a person is your uncle or nephew the programme will suffer, money will be wasted and the poor will not get the benefit.

Such is the human nature but there must be justice and if some political activist at the local level stands up for justice what can we not achieve in our country when we have such (poverty-alleviation) programmes? What Govindbhai does not like is also what we do not like; that is common to both of us. What we want is that this revolution, whether you call it total or partial, whatever, must come from the people.

The process of development has reached the roadside village although we tried to take it further. These villages can be reached by bus and in the night the officials can get back to their homes in the town. Those who should be living in the villages do not live there. These people think they have arrived in the villages if they reach a roadside village.

Seven Five Year Plans have been gone through and we are through with the roadside villages. Now we have to go into the interior. In the Eighth Five Year Plan we insist on going deep inside the remote villages. This is essential, almost inevitable. Because if we do not reach those remote areas our plans will not advance. I speak from experience. There is a fire burning in the hearts of the people in the remote areas. Anyone coming from Telangana will tell you what volcanic fire is burning there and what consequences the people in the villages there are undergoing. Those coming from Bihar and the Jharkhand region will tell you the same story. In Assam, in the backward Bodoland region again a fire is burning.

The feeling in the hearts of the people (in those areas) has been gathering strength for 40 years and now it has assumed the form of a volcano. We must pay full attention to it. Govindbhai rightly says that the people of the backward regions must be uplifted, they cannot be kept backward any longer. Whatever measure is effective at any given place should be used. If we treat it as a mere law and order problem we will be committing a grave error. We must not allow violence to spread. When we became independent we also got inequality along with independence. When the British power withdrew or the Nizam (of Hyderabad) withdrew from the scene, they did not hand over just social order to us. The task of reducing inequality was left to us. When this inequality grew further the task became doubly difficult for us.

That is the task before us now. Let us think about it. We proudly say, both before and during the elections and after elections, that we in India can manufacture everything from a needle to an aircraft. It is true we are manufacturing every possible thing. But are we producing anything except foodgrains, which can meet the requirements of the people? In spite of the production of edible oils we have to import such oils to the tune of Rs. 3,000 or 4,000 crores every year to supply edible oils to the people. This goes for other essential things and since we cannot buy them abroad with Indian rupees we have to spend some Rs.10,000 to 12,000 crore in foreign exchange each year on their imports. Take the case of petroleum products. The demand for petrol and for gas is going up and indigenous production is unable to meet the demand. So we have to import a large quantity which will bridge the gap between domestic production and the demand.

When it comes to distribution we have to ensure that the things reach the poorest among the people. But both, equitable distribution and the heavy imports, have to be balanced. Unless you earn dollars

to the tune of Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 4,000 crores you cannot supply edible oils to the people. No government can do it.

Take the case of potash, phosphate which the farmers need because nitrogen itself is not enough for fertilising the soil. We do not make potash or phosphate. It is just not there in our soil. This has to be imported. We have to earn the required amount in foreign exchange by stepping up our exports.

Now for the first time, our foreign exchange reserves have gone up gradually from Rs. 1,500 crores to Rs. 9,000 crores which is not a small achievement and we had to take quite a few steps. A lot of people had to undergo hardships. The bank rate had to be raised over which there is much shouting. Now we have reached a stage when we can say that the bad times are behind us. That, however, does not mean we are out of the woods and have reached a comfortable situation when we can sit back and live at ease. We do not wish to hide anything. The people will never forgive us if we do it. For months we will still have to tighten our belts.

Make no mistake. Our economic conditions are such that a lot of hard work will still be needed and many will have to make sacrifices. But only those who have the capacity to make sacrifices will be asked to do so, by way of paying taxes and so on. They will have to be ready to make these sacrifices. In the past when some government jobs were curtailed it was always the peon or the LDC (lower division clerk) on whom the axe fell. The States followed the Centre's example. Now I am wielding the axe from the Secretary's level. There is no level higher than that. Maybe, I may have to retrench some ministers. Look at this, even small States have big cabinets or 20, 25 or even 30 ministers and there are in addition Chairmen of corporations with cabinet status and cars preceding and following them! What is all this? Can any poor country afford this? I agree that all these things must stop and I am determined to do it. People are ready to make sacrifices but it will not do if only the poor are asked to make them and the others live in comfort. We will have to make a beginning with ministers.

Govindbhai mentioned something about small industries. It is not entirely correct but the answer is right. I would like to tell you that big industries alone are not going to increase our national wealth. In Punjab, for example there is hardly any large industry. There is not a single industry which has a capital of Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 4,000 crores. But the state is ahead of others in per capita income because it has a network of small industries. It is a different matter that guns are going off there often and the people are troubled by that. But even today Punjab is at the top in many matters.

I want a State Government to be formed there. We have decided, therefore, to hold election in the state. We do not want any part of the country where there is no democracy. How can we have democracy in the whole country, minus Punjab, or minus Kashmir? Why this 'minus' mentality?

When Punjab has a government of its own we can talk to it, about the state's development, just as I talk to Shri Naik, (Chief Minister of Maharashtra). If Punjab has no Chief Minister whom can I talk to? Not with the Governor of the state. So we wish to hold elections there and it is my appeal to all people in Punjab to take part in the polls. Let them form different parties and place their programme before the people. I have only one request: give me a State Government in Punjab, please oblige me and oblige the country. Thus this State has the highest per capita income in the country, with small industries and cottage industries, not big industries. We are going to redefine small industries in our new policy and I will send the full details to Govindbhai.

When I was Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and a land ceiling law was introduced, some people with a capital of Rs. 50,000 or so came to the Industry Department and asked how they could gainfully employ their capital since land could no longer be sold or purchased. I am sorry to say our Industry Department could not guide them and tell them how they could invest their money in areas other than land. But we should be able to guide such small entrepreneurs and help them to set up small industries. We will still need big industries, for example, in making steel or fertilisers. But the nation's wealth cannot be increased by the big industries. That can only be done through the small industries being encouraged. We are now going to lay great emphasis on their development and remove difficulties in their way, sort out problems or intricacies that may be holding up the progress. I want to assure you and our workers that I will strain every nerve to fulfil this task.

The challenge today is not that anyone has to work for twenty-four hours a day. I want workers who can devote only two hours a day, part time workers, as Govindbhai has said, to work for the good of the nation. Use your intelligence, your service and your power of persuasion which no whole time worker may be able to devote. There can be fulltime workers also but the part time worker will be much more effective. The time is coming when, under our new policy, we will need part time workers.

Whatever the new policy, we have not fashioned it at somebody's instance. It was not difficult to carry on with the old policy but how could we carry on with a situation in which we had to go on committing more and more money every year to an industry and

the manager, assistant manager and others could not use it productively. There was no justice in it. I am a lover of the public sector and I have spoken and written about it as much as anyone else. But if the public sector goes on piling up losses I must do something about it. What should I do if the public sector industry is not able to deliver the goods and I do not have more funds to put into it? Already a hundred thousand crores of rupees have been invested in the public sector. But neither in steel, nor in fertiliser or power it is able to meet the full requirements of the country. If I stop someone who has money to invest from doing so from where will we get steel, power or fertiliser for the people? The government does not have the resources but money must be found for achieving higher output.

I have therefore to think where to find the funds. Of course, we shall not be slaves to those who bring in investment. If need be, we shall starve. But this country would not go down on bended knees to anyone. We have not liberated our country for that. This country will not bow down to anyone, for money or technology or go down before any foreign army and its guns. But if they come as friends we will respond to friendship.

Technology is going out from India. Indians are going abroad to invest in other countries. There is nothing new in it. It has been going for long that money, technology and experts go from one country to another. There is so much technology in this country and so many technical men that foreign investor would not need to bring in technologists from outside.

All I wish to say is that what we do not produce in sufficient quantity we have to try now to produce in full measure. As far as possible I would like to produce this additional quantity of goods through the small sector but where necessary the big industries would also be set up. We have to consider which one is economical and which is not economical or suitable. We have thus a picture of the country before us. The country must have prosperous agriculture, and whatever we can do we will do for enhancing irrigation facilities. It will be our effort not to import food. But to be able to import whatever we have to import we must increase our export. Now we export machinery also. Earlier, we exported tea and coffee but now we also export the machinery required for various industries. Whenever exhibitions are held in India many foreign buyers pick up our machinery and take it home. In a way we are now equal to many of these foreign nations. We are not that backward as we sometimes think. Thus the process of exchange of goods and services between nations will continue and we can say with our heads held high that we will not allow ourselves to

be traded. We will keep our national pride intact and face any difficulties that may arise, solving our problems in our own way.

Recently we have taken in hand a very big project. For utilising solar energy, for producing power and other things we have taken up a research project and that will benefit other developing nations like India. The machinery and other equipment for solar energy will be given free to these nations. They are also backward like us and need help. We have told our brothers in the developing world that in a year or two we shall complete this project and tell you how much energy can be tapped from the sun to which there is no limit. There is a limit to coal and water resources. Fifty years from now we may not have good quality coal.

It is a matter of shame that we have been exporting iron ore. Why should we export it? We decided yesterday that no more iron ore will be exported as far as possible. Whatever contracts have been entered into will be honoured. But if others can use it by setting up industries why cannot we do it? If we do not have resources for setting up such industries we can bring in the funds. It does not matter if the investor who may be setting up a plant somewhere also can come in here and do it. We have now taken a policy decision that our raw materials will, as far as possible, not be exported. We will have to be careful and see how far it is useful or not. But such a policy decision had to be taken one day and now we have done it.

The biggest principle of self-reliance is that what you produce must be utilised by you. How long can you go on exporting your raw materials? Others are exporting value added goods and we can also do it. We have to equal them and we are now reaching that stage of matching them in their exertions.

We cannot accept any conditions for investment which will be detrimental to our freedom, certainly not the condition, which requires you to accept whatever the investor says. We can accept only that which suits us. We have maintained our independence and we shall maintain it. There will be no compromise on it. We are a big country and everywhere in the world people have opened their doors. Let us keep our policy intact and carry out our programmes, while the door is kept open let us remove the disparities in our midst.

We have undertaken a difficult task. You should first understand it and tell the government what co-operation you need in carrying out your programmes. We will be ready to help. We shall explain the policy to you from time to time. We shall co-operate with any political worker, any representative or worker. I have never rejected a good idea or suggestion. Even though we may be small men we

follow the principles of Gandhiji and keep our minds open to receive the thoughts of others. We process the ideas and accept what we consider good and reject the others. We do not lose sight of our sense of discrimination.

There was some talk just now about a development board and both Govindbhai and Shankarraoji were giving each other some assurance. I will carry out that assurance. Govindbhai was saying "It is required soon." So I can certainly give you this assurance about doing it soon. The proposal is coming to us and we will not take long time over it because we deem it necessary. We have decided it once and it will be done.

I am grateful to you, to Govindbhai that you gave us this much opportunity to fulfil our wish. There is one more wish. What we want is that the country at large should know something about you and your work. Give us an opportunity to honour you in a small way. You never held office nor did you have power and yet you accomplished so much. This institution speaks of your work, every brick of it does. I say it again let us honour you.

Is it not necessary that the people should know of the good work done by someone? So let us have this much opportunity. Please do not veto us if we seek to project your work and your personality.

Thank you all. I am younger than him, so I cannot give him my blessings. But I pray to God that you may live a hundred years and your leadership may continue to guide us and our country.

Common Task of Nation-Building

I HAVE GREAT pleasure in welcoming you all to this fortieth conference of Labour Ministers.

India is passing through a very difficult and yet momentous phase in its socio-economic resurgence. Significant global changes have taken place posing new challenges for the countries of the developing world. Changes must be made which will lend to an

accelerated economic development. Structural adjustment requires courage and innovation.

Industrial relations within the country have remained comparatively cordial and harmonious in the last several years. The average loss of mandays between 1985 to 1990 remained at around 31 million per annum. It was 47 million per annum in the earlier five years. But this loss remains a cause of concern. India cannot afford this. My government has been striving to revive and strengthen tripartite consultations. We want to resolve areas of conflict through a proper understanding of issues and a resolution of issues through consensus and co-operation. We will continue to initiate and to support these efforts. Our President has appealed for bandhs and strikes to be eschewed for the next couple of years, so that we can attend unitedly and single-mindedly to our common task of nation-building.

We have been trying to restructure the industrial relations law. A bipartite committee has been up as recommended by the Indian Labour Conference. The employers' and the workers' sides of the committee have agreed on many crucial matters. But wider consensus is still required on many important issues.

A major item of the agenda today, as Mr. Sangma has already pointed out, is the report of the Ramanujam Committee. If we achieve a measure of consensus here, we could place it before the Indian Labour Conference and bring forward suitable legislation. Any such legislation must be a genuine product of tripartite consultation. Effectiveness must be fully ensured.

The Ramanujam committee has recommended certain norms for a minimum required membership for the registration of a union in the organised sector. It has recommended that dual membership of trade unions should be discouraged and has sought to restrict the number of outsiders in the executive of a trade union. Rivalry within a union is a worrisome feature in industrial relations. The Committee has suggested the exclusion of the jurisdiction of civil courts where these disputes may remain pending for long, long time. It recommends the intervention of the National Trade Union Centre or a Labour Court to sort out the matter.

The Committee has also agreed that all workers should have a right to redressal of their genuine grievances. The procedure and the machinery would require to be adapted for different categories of workers and institutions. Efforts have failed in the past to make a separate law for employees of hospitals, educational institutions and charitable organisations which are presently covered by the Industrial Disputes Act. I recall how Professor Upendra Baxi once remarked on the evolution of universities from what Panditji called

“temples of learning” to industries under the IDA. We would greatly value your suggestions on the features of a separate legislation which should, while protecting the interests of workers, also maintain a level of excellence in service.

This I think is very important in view of the endemic strikes that go on in hospitals—doctors going on strike, nurses going on strike, other personnel going on strike and leaving the patients to die. Now, this is something totally unconscionable. If the employer is bad, if the Government is bad, if the management is bad, it is not the patient who has to suffer for it. This is the most obvious thing. You make whatever law you like, you make the management accountable in whatever manner you like, but you have no right to ask the patient to die. He comes to the hospital to be cured, not to die. If he has to die, he can die at home. This is where the administration of hospitals, where human life is concerned becomes very different. If there is a teachers’ strike one can even do with it in the sense that when the strike ends they can take extra classes and examinations can be postponed for a month or two; this is happening. But when it comes to a hospital, this is absolutely inhuman. Once human life goes, you can’t get it back. You can make stringent measures to see that the employer behaves, but cannot really allow any strike which will leave only the dead behind. The strike will end but human life will not come back. That is something very different, very special and in a country like India, where compassion is the essence of our culture, how can you manage, how can you countenance a thing like this ?

Therefore, I think you will have to go very deep into this because in other countries I have seen, in U.K. for instance, they normally don’t go on strike. I have not come across any strike of doctors or nurses or any staff in the hospitals for days and days together. When I was the Health Minister, I made enquiries about the grievances of hospital staff in that country. It was confirmed that there were grievances and demands of staff there also. But there is an element of understanding that those who are doctors, who are working in hospitals, they realise that they are responsible for the lives of the human beings who come to the hospital for treatment. This is what we have to understand and from area to area, activity to activity, you will have to make some distinction.

A serious deficiency in the mechanism for consultation with workers has been the absence of a central statute on recognition of trade unions. The economy is now going through a process of structural adjustments. We are committed to ensure that the process protects the interests of workers as far as possible. This objective can be achieved only if there is a system of quick and effective

consultation between the management and the workers. The flexibility of response of industrial enterprises is also crucial to their success in the more competitive environment which will emerge from deregulation and opening up of the economy. I would, therefore, urge you to focus your deliberations on the vital issue of workers' representation, grievance redressal and dispute resolution. We cannot afford the luxury of protracted litigation in labour courts and tribunals which in some cases continue even in High Courts and the Supreme Court. It is the worker who suffers the most from these delays.

The trade unions have expressed their concern about certain aspects of the new industrial policy which we announced in July 1991. The basic aim of the policy is to accelerate technological change and modernise the Indian economy in order to make it efficient and internationally competitive. The policy has been designed not merely as an immediate response to the serious problems faced by the economy but as a long term measure to generate employment and alleviate poverty. The process of stabilisation and structural adjustment may entail difficulties for labour. We are committed to protecting the interests of labour, enhancing its welfare and providing facilities for skill upgradation so that it is able to adjust to technological changes. This is a statement, an announcement, which has been made times without number and I would like to repeat it again on this occasion. I have said this in every country I have visited, I have told this to every industrialist from abroad who wanted to know what the Exit Policy is going to be and I told them very clearly that we are not going to throw workers out merely because we are upgrading the industry. It is not like that. We would like modernisation, we would like technological excellence, we would like everything but we have a human face to everything that is done in India. There should be no misgiving about this. That does not mean that we will simply allow the industry to go to decay because that will lead to greater suffering for the workers. We will have to correct all the aberrations and at the same time keep in view the interests of the workers. That is why you have this National Renewal Fund and the Finance Minister was saying yesterday—he is quite enthusiastic about it—that he would like to add to the Fund, if necessary. I don't know when he will do it, I have no idea. But the point is that this is something which has been welcomed everywhere. When I mentioned this in other countries, they said that this is the real solution to the problem. Thus, we are finding solutions to whatever problems that arise from time to time. We are not oblivious to this fact. This is what I would like to assure you once again.

It is with this end in view that the National Renewal Fund has been constituted. Your views on how to make the best use of this Fund will be vital. It is not going to be easy. You have a Fund, but how do you utilise it? How do you apply the Fund to individuals? What are your schemes? How does a carpenter suddenly become a blacksmith? The point is you have to change his profession. You have to change whatever he has been doing. You have to give him renewed skills, different kinds of skills. All this is going to take time and involve a lot of work. Just having a Fund is not enough. I am sure those who are running this, who are in-charge of this are looking after these things. I would like to have a review of this after a while. I will have a meeting and I would like to assure you that this Renewal Fund is going to be very usefully utilised. Whatever problems the labour may have in this dislocation, they will be solved.

The Central Government has constituted a Special Tripartite Committee to examine the effects of the new industrial policy on the problems concerning labour and related matters. It has also been decided to have Tripartite Industrial Committees in respect of industries in which sickness is endemic such as engineering, textiles, jute etc.

A major area of concern is that relating to State Transport Corporations and State Electricity Boards. I think this is something on which we would like to solicit your views. You know that today almost no one is prepared to come to India with any new investment on power projects. They say they won't get anything back. If they are not going to get any returns on the investment, why should they come. There is no reason for them to come. We might be smug and say we will be doing whatever we want; you won't be able to do whatever you want because if you want industrialisation, you need power. Without power, you cannot industrialise and what is the use of having all these grandiose schemes of industrial expansion if you don't have power expansion. Both come only when the returns from the power sector, from the Electricity Boards, are adequate to finance the running of the power sector.

Now we find that most of the State Electricity Boards are in the red. I don't know how many are exceptions, maybe one or two, I have no idea. But I must say that a majority of them are in the red. Unless we are able to put them on a better footing, whereby they get the returns that are expected, all your investment is going to be a waste and once your investment goes waste there will be no further investment and there will be no incentive for any one from outside to come and invest. We have been talking to people.

I have been talking individually to very big companies. They say first put your house in order, then we will come. And they want to come in a big way. It is not as if they are against coming to India. But this is something which we have to consider very carefully in order to attract investment in power from abroad because within the country, as you know, the scope is very limited.

The State Government may also form their own tripartite committees or take suitable measures for consultation in regard to state public enterprises and other industries, so as to initiate steps for making them viable. I should stress, however, that consultation among the parties can be useful only in a positive frame of mind and in a congenial atmosphere, with a desire to achieve results. The Government, the management and the labour must do their utmost to improve the level of performance of industrial enterprises.

I would like to stress at this point that this Conference is going to be of crucial importance in the entire programme that we are undertaking. Please go into each of these aspects as carefully as you can. It is not just passing a resolution that I want; I want that you must go into every aspect in greater detail than you have done ever before. We are at a crucial stage. We want your opinion. We want your co-operation. As I said, it must be a partnership between the Centre and the States. It is not that the States are asking for something and the Centre giving them something; it is not at all like that. We will have to work together on all these matters. The more I think about the development process in India, the more I feel that it has to be a partnership between the Centre and the States. The Planning Commission only give us the general guidelines but the execution has to be done by the Centre and the States together. That is why I attach so much of importance to this Labour Ministers' Conference. I hope you will be able to come up with viable solution to the problems plaguing the industries, the country—the labour problems that have been festering for some time. I wish you well in your efforts.

I have great pleasure in inaugurating this Conference.

I want to add here a little bit about the Electricity Boards and the State Transport Corporations. The Labour Ministers' Conference is only one part of it. The management part of it also will have to be taken care of. In fact, the management part of it is even more important because there are so many defects in the management. I would like to call a Conference of the State Electricity Boards. I will ask the Power Minister to do it and between Power and Labour they may manage or I will address them. I will participate in the meeting myself. Because, I find that infrastructure is the most

important thing for our industrialisation and if we do not look after these two areas of infrastructure there can be no industrialisation. I am very particular about these two areas. If from the labour side useful suggestions come up on these two, we will be happy. We will supplement them with suggestions from the management side also as early as possible.

Attention to Island Development

I AM INDEED very happy to be here on this occasion, an occasion which is very rare in the life of a person. It comes only once in a life time when all of us value the service of a valued colleague and give him the best wishes for future and honour him in our own humble way. The people of India when it comes to vote in elections, are very very critical; they are very careful and are task masters. They do not close their eyes and vote for a candidate. They examine every thing that the candidate has done for the last five years and only when they are satisfied that he deserves another term, they give another term to him, otherwise they just throw him out. I cannot count too many people in India who have been elected to Parliament in seven elections, as many as seven elections. Many have been elected twice, thrice or even four times. But seven times is rare and Mr. Sayeed happens to be one of those handful who have really come up to the expectations of his own people and sat in Parliament for seven terms. I may tell you that he is senior to me. I am only 15 years in Parliament and he is 25. So I do not know whether I have to congratulate him or you. I think I shall congratulate you first for having chosen the very worthy person who has taken care of the development aspects of this area, who has been with you, who has been through thick and thin, through happiness or unhappiness. I should also congratulate him because many members of Parliament after one or two terms become a little negligent, they lose their interest, and they think that after all it is the same thing being done over and over again, But Sayeed has not lost his interest. He has kept up his interest in the work of

Speech while inaugurating the Silver Jubilee of Mr. P.M. Sayeed in Parliament, Minicoy Islands, 9 February 1992

the people, in the lives of the people, in the development of the islands. And, therefore, he also deserves to be fully congratulated, heartily congratulated for the same.

When we are celebrating the completion of his 25 years in Parliament what we are really doing is to tell everyone in the world that the people of India are essentially grateful. They do not forget a representative who does good for them and they do not spare a representative who forgets them. So both things they can do; they can punish and they can also reward. And that is why Indian Democracy is so vital, so vibrant and so meaningful. No one can say that I can just get elected without doing any work; and also no one can say that the people will not reward him if he works for them. I have also seen all the elections and older in age to Sayeed, I can tell you one thing. One very important characteristic of the Indian voter is he never opens up his mind until he goes to the ballot box. Nobody knows for whom he is voting. Only after the votes are counted, people will know for whom he has voted. So the intelligence of the Indian voter is something which is to be noted and I am happy to say that when the voters are so intelligent there is no danger for democracy ever in India.

On this occasion there is the need to take stock of what has been done for Lakshadweep island and also to chalk out a programme for the future. There is an eleven-point programme which has been chalked out. Sayeed has been very wise in doing this. When there is an occasion you must give it a fitting recognition and dedicating yourself to that programme. I would like to dedicate myself to this programme on this occasion. I have seen all the items given, all the eleven items given in this. I think most of them can be done, some of them need a little more money. But in course of time we will find the money and see that all the eleven programmes are completed. You know that these islands were the favourites of Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and all the Prime Ministers of India. They have had special affection. Rajivji set up a special authority, called "The Island Development Authority" which was not there earlier. The Authority started functioning under the Planning Commission. As I said at another meeting today for a couple of years the activities of the I.D.A. (Island Development Authority) had become dormant; they were not very much evident because not much care was taken by those Governments. Now I have taken a decision that the Island Development Authority will be fully activated, orders have been given, they are working on the Agenda for the first meeting of the reconstituted Island Development Authority and it will be only a few weeks before the entire programme of the Authority, the new

programme of the Authority will be introduced in full swing and because we are on the eve of the Eighth Five Year Plan. In the Five Year Plan itself we will see that as much as possible is included in the Plan so that there will be no problem about taking sanctions every time and running from pillar to post, from officer to officer. It will be a part of the Plan and it will be executed.

This is a happy occasion. But I must remind you that the country is passing through a very difficult phase in its history. When the Congress Government came seven months ago, it faced several problems bequeathed by the earlier Governments. We are trying to come out of these problems and dedicated Members of Parliament like Sayeed are standing like a rock in favour, in support of the new policies of the Congress Government and I feel very very encouraged that with the help and support of all these senior and enthusiastic Members of Parliament, we will be able to solve all our problems and put the country back on the rails of progress and prosperity.

These islands may be small in themselves, but they are great because they are part of a great country, a very big country, one of the biggest in the world and we have certain importance which many other countries do not have. Therefore, we have some opponents also. We have some difficulties coming from outside, from across the border, from all kinds of places, all kinds of quarters. Whenever people do not want India to prosper, they will create some problems. But right from Jawaharlal Nehru down to today we have always solved our problems, we have never been daunted by difficulties because the people of India have stood like one man whenever there was adversity in our history. For five thousand years in our history, this country has not invaded any other country. This country has not annexed the territory of any other country. We do not covet anything belonging to others but at the same time everyone should understand that we will not part with even one inch of our land and whatever belongs to us we will defend until the very last and we will succeed in defending it.

We want to live in peace with the whole world, we want peace within the country, we want peace on the border, we want peace with our neighbours. We want peace everywhere because in our culture, peace is something which is of fundamental importance. So you, my friends, my brothers and sisters, you are part of this great heritage. Let us all unite keeping the integrity of the country intact and let us all strive to make this country great, prosperous, development-oriented, because development is the one thing which we have to concentrate upon if we have to be equal to other countries of the world. So once again I take this opportunity of

congratulating Mr. Sayeed on his completion of 25 years of Membership of Parliament and wish him another 25 years for the time being. I will extend it later. The Government, myself, all his colleagues—we are all here to support him in whatever he wants to do for these Islands, in whatever vision he has for the future prosperity of those who have been electing him, election after election and I congratulate all of you once again.

Communication Needs Imagination

I WANTED TO know how effectively the units are functioning; how much is the intimate connection between the field officers, those who are incharge of disseminating information and the people at large. So, I thought your interaction amongst yourselves will bring out certain things which may be useful to us also. The Government profits in the sense that if there is a feedback, this feedback can become useful as an input in the policy as well as the policy being implemented.

It is not easy to explain a policy. It is even more difficult to explain the changes in a policy when the changes are complex. The person who is supposed to explain has to educate himself first. I am not sure whether this has been done in the case of change of policy that has taken place about six or seven months ago. If that has not been done, that needs to be done. Having done that, the rest is left to you to translate one language into another—not from English to Hindi, but from the language of the Government to the language of the people. Are you able to communicate with the people in the idiom which they understand and use? That is what you have to ask yourself. If you are able to do that, you are effective. Otherwise, you are just a human parrot.

Feedback is important because if they say this is not right, this doesn't appear to be right or in this area this is not working for the following reason, that feedback can come only from you. It may come through other media also. But the point is that you are

the link between the Government and the people and if that is so then the feedback has to come through you and by you. You will have to be absolutely honest in telling us what the people are saying. So, it is a kind of two-way traffic which needs to be established. If you have been able to do that, your usefulness is established.

The policy which has been adumbrated is complex because the earlier policy was also not clear to many people; it came to us as a tradition, as a heritage; we inherited from Panditji, Indiraji, Rajivji and other leaders. But at every point, there was a change. It was not a carbon copy of one another. But the changes came in a natural way and people could understand. Today what has to be understood is that there is no reversal of the policy, there is a reorientation of the policy. It is very difficult to understand unless one explains these things.

I find that most of the programmes, most of the material here in front of me is a reproduction. Yes, it should be a reproduction but should it stop with reproduction? Now, who is annotating it? Who is explaining it? Who is giving the kind of commentary that is needed because every law needs a commentator. In our *Dharmashastras* the commentators were better known than the law-givers themselves and the commentators did such a fine job that they took the law to every home, they explained how a particular Sutra applies to a particular situation. So these *Prabandhkaras*, the commentators, were the real mainstay of the legal system, of the moral system, of the cultural heritage in India. But in explaining something it is not just the reproduction of the policy that will help, but the explanation of the policy, the comment on the policy in order to make it understood by the common man, in the language of the common man, in the idiom of the common man and in the figures that the common man can understand.

If you are talking to a farmer, if you have to give an example, you can't give an example which the farmer cannot understand. You will have to find figures of speech, words, idioms and also what you call the *drishtantas* of the farmer. If you are talking to someone else, you will have to think of what language he understands.

Communication is essentially a very difficult job, a job which needs great imagination. Can you do it in the case of a Public Distribution System? There are lots of people in the villages in India—go to Rajasthan, go to Andhra Pradesh, go to Tamil Nadu; anywhere, you will find people who are instantaneous poets. Their poetry may not be exactly according to Panini or any other master, but he can immediately relate with the people. We have got the Bhats, and so many people, who have been for ages, for centuries,

contacting the people, relating with the people, communicating; they are great communicators; they may not be scholars. Can we take a leaf out of these people? In every language we have these forms, different forms. There is a *Burrakatha*, there is a *Nautanki*, there is a *Tamasha* and so on. Now, can we really make use of them?

So, I wanted to know what you evaluate of your Division, your units. It is not my evaluation, it is your own. It is the kind of self-assessment which you will have to do. Throughout your careers you will have to do it; only then you will be able to communicate properly.

There is no text book by which you can become a communicator. Some principles will be there. There is no text book to tell a person how he can become a great poet. There is no text book for poetry. Yes, some rules, but how can one poet relate with the people and create a revolution with ten songs? And this is what happened during our freedom struggle. We give very great credit to our leaders of those days. Yes, they did a great job, but there are people who did a greater job and they are not very well known. I remember in some languages just half a dozen songs which created a revolution during the freedom struggle. Leaders gave the leadership but the communicator was somebody different.

In this multi-lingual country, it is not easy even for a speech to be properly conveyed. If somebody comes and talks in English, in the translation itself 70 per cent of the effect will go. Therefore, you have to have an original communicator. He understands and then communicates originally with the people in his own language, in his own way and his genius is what really counts.

An interpreter is in fact much more important. I used to interpret for Panditji, Indiraji. Invariably he used to come after the meeting and thank me. Very peculiar thing! Such a great man! I was a nobody in those times, just an MLA or not even that. But only when people heard me, they started clapping; when they heard Panditji they didn't understand. So, he could see that only after it was communicated, the effect came.

It is necessary to communicate with the people today, more necessary than ever before because there are certain changes which are rather sharp. They are not routine changes, and therefore they need to be explained properly, understood properly first, and then explained properly to the people. Therefore, this is the time when I wanted to meet all of you. I wanted you to meet amongst yourselves because we are at that stage where certain sharp changes in the implementational aspects, and other aspects have come about, have had to come about, and, therefore, the 'why' and the

‘where’ and ‘how’ of all these changes need to be explained very clearly.

So many things need to be explained and I don’t think the electronic media alone will be able to do that. That’s why I want the human agency, if it is good. Now that is the big ‘if’. You please prove your usefulness, let the people understand your usefulness. Equip yourselves. You have to be a student, you have to be a learner. I always consider myself a learner—always, *aajeevan*. And this has to be the motto of a person who is a communicator. The motto of a communicator is that he is a perpetual learner. If he is not a learner, he cannot communicate.

I know everyone cannot make a very big success of it. But at least a reasonable success you will have to achieve because so much depends on what you do. I realise how difficult it has been for us to communicate with the people and how much more necessary it is for the communicators under us to be doing their job well.

Protecting the Environment

I AM INDEED happy to have this opportunity to join you here at this Conference. You have two aspects of the Conference already delineated—one is that of environment and the other of forests. They are both closely related obviously but they are not identical. So, it is a good idea to discuss them separately and perhaps also discuss a third factor, namely development. Now, you cannot discuss or examine either development in isolation or environment in isolation. This is the basic fact which we have to understand. I entirely understand that each Ministry or each activity or those who are engaged in the activity would find their own activity important, pre-eminent; at the same time there is something like a holistic view.

Yesterday, I had occasion to point out that this holistic view is important, a view which is properly harmonised. If we do not harmonise it will look very good on paper but at the ground level it will not work. We have gone through this mill for a long time,

Address to the concluding session of the National Conference on “Environment, Forests and Wildlife”, New Delhi, 20 February 1992

for decades and decades and we should understand the limitations. Personally, I am acquainted with these problems because I represented an area for a long stretch of 20 years, an area which has the best or some of the best forests in the country. I know the problems of the people residing in the forests, problems created by nature. But with those problems they have learnt to live. But problems created by the Forest Department is a different matter. They are also coping with those problems; we know that. But could we not do something to mitigate the hardship of those people, at the same time preserve our forests, protect our forests?

Now, who are the depredators? I take forests first because that comes easily to my mind. We know more about forests than environment. Environment is a new-fangled idea. Only about one or two decades back, it was initiated as a very compulsive idea by Indiraji, but even after that it was not picked up as much as it has been picked up only during the last few years. But coming back to forests, who are the depredators? The depredators are not the inhabitants of the forest areas. They are not. I entirely agree. They are the sufferers in fact. The depredators are the contractors, the vested interests and those who have absolutely no feeling for the forests. They just want to fell the forests and fill their pockets. Felling on one hand and filling on the other.

Now, it is not that forests should not be exploited. They should be exploited. In fact, forests are meant to be exploited within the limits and scientific exploitation of forests adds to forests. It does not deplete the forest wealth of the country, of any country. But if it goes beyond that point, then you are really playing with the future of your coming generations. Now, the satellite pictures tell a very sad story. You don't even have to go to satellites, those of us who represent such areas know it. I became MLA from such an area in 1957; my experience was we saw as many tigers as voters. After 20 years, almost the entire area was denuded because all the big teak trees, hundred years old, 75 years old, were mercilessly cut, cut in the nights; even before the roads were laid, small bullock carts were used. Contractors engaged hundred or two hundred bullock-carts and by the time the night ended, the wood reached a place where no one could detect it. Now, this kind of thing has been going on for a long time. It is not the scientific exploitation but the robbing of forests. The pilferage, the large scale pilferage of forests has been responsible for all this environmental degradation and denudation.

Could the Forest Departments do something about it? I am not sure because we also know something about the Forest Departments as they are situated in the States. I don't want to really make any

comment. But if you could come to some conclusion, some workable conclusion whereby you could save forests, get rid of this greed or the greedy breed of contractors who are out to destroy the forests of India—out to destroy, I have no doubt about that—those of them who are doing this should be checked. Those who are doing honest work as contractors certainly should be allowed to continue.

The idea of over-exploitation of the earth's resources was not even mooted 20 or 25 years ago or even 15 years ago. In fact it was fashioned, it was part of development, a part of progress to exploit nature more and more and still more. If you can't do it, you are backward. If you can do it with a vengeance you are forward, advanced in many respects. So, this advancement consisted in the over-exploitation of natural resources.

The retribution has come. The retribution has come in the shape of the depletion of Ozone and the global warming. I am not really conversant with all the technical details but it is made out that there is something very catastrophic happening to the earth, the depletion of Ozone layer. Now, we had conference, international conferences which informed us and we are going to have a very big UN Conference in Brazil as you know. But the point is how did we land ourselves here at this point, in this mess? Who is responsible?

I have a feeling that here Mahatma Gandhi has something very relevant to say. He said, "There is enough for every one's need but there is not enough for every one's greed" and this is precisely the affliction of mankind today. All the human beings on this earth, even after allowing for rapid growth in population, can live, can live with a certain amount of simplicity, comfort and happiness. But if some nations want that all this should go to them and the others should be completely deprived, there is trouble and this cannot happen. Now, upon our country rests the responsibility of pleading the case of the developing countries. It is going to be a very grave responsibility, very heavy burden. But we are used to it. We have causes to espouse, causes to defend, causes to advance and I am sure that the Government of India will not be found wanting in doing its duty by the international community and particularly the people of the developing countries.

I want to tell you that this is not just a matter of one State or one District or one Project. There should be no contradiction between development and environment. That is the bottomline. That bottomline should never be missed. There can be no contradiction, there shall be no contradiction, should be no contradiction, between man and nature. It is absolutely unnatural. Man has lived

with nature for thousands of years. We have no right, we have no business to create this seeming contradiction between man and nature. How do we reconcile? That is the question for experts, for administrators, for politicians, for the leaders of the people. So, when I come across this pleading for environment, all this pleading has one objective and that objective is man again. You come back to man and the future of man. You are pleading for environment because environment ensures the future of man. You say, "Don't live for today, live for tomorrow; don't live for yourself, live for the coming generations." If our forefathers had not been prudent, we wouldn't have been living today and if we are not prudent, you will be the last generation on the face of the earth. So, it is that simple. Scriptures have said it. Religions have said it in different words. But what all has been said amounts to this.

There are finite resources on the face of this earth. Nothing is infinite. Only God is infinite. Anything apart from God is finite. That is the main thing one has to understand. There is a saying in one of the languages I know which says if you sit and eat, even a mountain will get exhausted. However big the mountain, it will get exhausted if your work is only to sit and eat it. Whether it is grain or food or butter or whatever, even if you have a mountain of it, it will get exhausted. Therefore, the idea is that you should again put something back in it. If you don't, then you overdraw. I am sorry to say that for quite some time even in agriculture, I hold that view although it is quite controversial, it has become controversial all over the world—but I hold the view that we are over-exploiting the humous content of our agriculture land also.

India and China have had sustained agriculture for more than four to five thousand years. Why? Just because they did not mine the land for agriculture, they only farmed the land for agriculture. That is the difference. We don't believe in mining the land for agriculture, we scrape the upper crust and from that get life, get food. You go deep down and finally in some areas you end up with alkalinity. Thereafter, you can't get anything. You put more fertilisers, more chemical fertilisers, if you put per acre one bag of fertiliser this year, next year you will have to make it one and a half or one and a quarter because you are not giving anything back to the earth, back to the soil. Now, this soil conservation is also one very important factor to be considered in the conservation of the resources of the earth, including environment. Environment is affected if so much of erosion takes place, deforestation takes place. Rainfall is also affected. So, it is all one chain in which so many links you find. Any single link, any one of the links, if

you destroy the whole chain is destroyed. This is the *Shrinkhala*, the chain we have to understand.

We have the wisdom in this country. There is nothing which we have to learn from others, the only thing is we may have to unlearn a few things which we have somehow adopted for the last hundred or hundred and fifty years where over-exploitation is the name of the game, where making money at the expense of others is the name of the game. It is time you jettison them and create an atmosphere by educating the people that they can live happily, they can live happily with the resources available to them, but of course, we have to set the example. And the people will never listen to you unless you set the example and we are not really setting the correct example unfortunately.

How do you get people into any of our programmes. They just don't come for wages. Wages are not enough. They can get wages if they go to a town. One can start a rickshaw and he gets higher income than what he gets in a village. But how do you stop him from going to the town if he is going to get a higher wage? This is a human problem. So we have environmental, human, attitudinal and social problems which complicate any cause in this country or any country making it difficult to solve. But we are determined to solve it. Indiraji has shown the way.

We have a Ministry. The Ministry has been over the years improving from a totally negative attitude by saying that every file should come to the Central Cabinet. I think it should be possible for the State Governments and the Central Government to sit together, make it a common cause. This is what I have been saying. Whether it is family planning, whether it is afforestation, whether it is environment, whether it is development in general, it is not just a question of the Central Government alone, I don't visualise any activity of the Central Government alone. It has to be an activity in which the State Governments also take part. Only this partnership will work. Even in External Affairs, you see we used to say that External Affairs are totally in Central Government. No. No longer it is the case. If the State Governments do not co-operate, the Central Government cannot do anything in the Ministry of External Affairs. It is not any more question of good manners. You have to get results. If an industrialist wants to come from Germany or Japan or some place you have to get him land and you don't have land in the Central Secretariat. You have to go to a State Government. You have to go to a Chief Minister, maybe you will have to go to your Revenue Inspector. So, from Germany to the Revenue Inspector in a particular State, this is the unbroken chain, you can't break it anywhere. The world and all activity in the world have

become so integrated that in the same country you cannot imagine any segregation between the Central and the State Governments. Therefore, it is good that the Ministers from States are here; it is not just the annual ritual of a conference, I think there should be a meeting of minds.

Let us understand what that is. I have gone into the list of projects that needed clearance. We have been clearing these things wherever I find that clearance is no problem. But where there is a clear case for stopping a project, for not going ahead with a project, the State Government cannot insist and should not insist on it because it is not for the Central Government that we are stopping them, we are stopping them for the people of the States, for the people of the country. So, it has to be a meeting of minds at Conference like this and I hope you will be able to come to such viable conclusions, viable procedures that you don't have to accuse each other. If the State Government and Central Government can sit across the table and find out parameters subject to which clearances will be given, the parameters beyond which you should not go, neither the State should insist nor the Central Government should agree to go beyond the parameters. It should be absolutely institutionalised. If these are the conditions, clearance is given. Otherwise, clearance is not given. Whether it concerns my constituency or Kamal Nath's constituency, the result should be the same.

I once again request you to sit with the Central Government, bring out practical solutions apart from, of course, extolling the cause for which we are all there. Apart from that, you must come up with viable answers, practical answers, actionable programmes; it is not just programmes on paper and then you will find that this partnership has yielded very good results. I am sure it will yield results but one needs to work in that direction.

So far as the Central Government is concerned, in the international aspect of it, I can tell you in all sincerity and with all confidence that we will uphold the rights of the developing countries to continue with their development without over-exploiting nature but at the same time they also will have to discipline themselves. As we are trying to discipline ourselves all other countries will have to discipline themselves. It is no use in an international conference just make a few sallies against some other countries and trying to score points. This is one area in which scoring points over each other will not do. It will never work and you will never work and you will remain where you are; the advanced countries will advance and we will be simply looking on while we remain where we are. So, we have to find viable solutions internationally also.

I hope Kamal Nathji will consult all of you when we are going to attend this Conference in Rio. It is a very important Conference, extremely important and this is going to be watershed in the history of environmental protection in the world because after this if it is not in the right direction, then I am afraid we will also suffer. So, we will have to be very careful on behalf of the developing countries. I have been asking the G-15 to prepare a harmonised stand on this as far as possible so that we do not work at cross-purposes in the Conference. We have this great responsibility on our shoulders, we would shoulder it but we will be able to do it successfully only when we solve our own problems within the country and do not work at cross-purposes between the States and the Centre.

New Industries for Development

I AM INDEED happy to have this opportunity of visiting my old constituency. I am pleased to see that the works and tasks initiated by me are now taking shape. This gives me pleasure. Earlier I had visited this place in times of distress and agony when a few villages of Kotale were washed off. I had then come to meet those people and render possible assistance. Actually there are only two occasions when one normally visits—either festivity or sorrow. This time festivity brings me here. During my last visit deep sorrow was writ large on your faces. I had then gone back with a heavy heart. This time having come on a happy occasion, I go back with happiness.

The factories proposed to be set up here will not only benefit our country but also help boosting our exports. Today ours is a great country needing import of a number of items. Our rupee does not help and we need dollars and pounds, foreign exchange, for this purpose. We have shortage of oil, fertilisers, petrol and diesel. Many people are unaware of these shortages. We think that every item is grown and produced here. While it is true, the production of certain items is not adequate to meet our demands. Then there is a fertiliser like potassium. It is just non-existent here. Our farmers

know how difficult agriculture is without potassium. To import these items, we must export a number of goods ourselves. So the factories now being set up here with foreign equity, our own capital or both are a must. Hence, we are immensely benefited by the factories having export viability. For this we need machinery and technology know-how. Since these components are not indigenously available, we bring these from abroad. The French and Germans have volunteered to transfer their know-how, machinery and some finance as well.

In future, our boys and girls, who are busy in study and research may develop even better infrastructure. But this could take five or ten years. We cannot afford to sit idle till that period. So we have to import technology and have collaboration with others. We export, earn foreign exchange and import items for our use. This cycle of economy goes on continuously. Because of the foreign collaboration the country is benefited and employment is generated. Our young people get employment. They get work. Our rural folk like construction workers, workers engaged in road construction and stone crushing etc. also get employment.

There is one more benefit, that is development. One can earn wages anywhere but one feels disillusioned without proper development. So I advise these entrepreneurs to choose 25 to 30 villages according to their capacity and help in their development. This way you will become a part of these people. People will accept you. They will not treat you as foreigners. In any healthy industrial climate it is essential that people of that area live together in harmony. This atmosphere helps in increased production and profitability which in turn substantiates our agricultural earnings. When people earn reasonably, they invest the earnings in agriculture, and make it more productive. This leads to development of agriculture as well.

I congratulate all those friends who have set up industries with their hard work in such a short time and wish them speedy success. I hope the aluminium factory, the foundation of which has just been laid, also functions at the earliest. We badly need aluminium. This is an industry of our future and is of paramount importance to our country. The technology they have brought in is of high order. They will, in no way be less, rather go a step ahead, in the world technology and benefit of this would accrue to you all and to our brothers who have opened a new chapter by setting up huge factories here. I welcome them all and congratulate them and convey my best wishes.

Economic Reforms Help Economic Sovereignty

I AM GRATEFUL to all the honourable Members who have participated in this debate.

I had not expected this sudden development. National consensus was being sought, was being obtained, and generally was being given. Suddenly we are faced with a tense situation, a tense moment. Tense not only for this country, for the people of this country, but also not quite good from the point of view of the country's image abroad. It is this latter aspect which causes me more concern. At a time when the reform package introduced in India was hailed everywhere, at a time when it was yielding results, at a time when we were getting investment, investment in infrastructure, at a fast pace, a pace which is about 14 to 15 times that of what had happened in the previous years, at such a time, this debate and the turn of this debate, I am sorry to say, has brought a set back or is likely to bring a setback. It will take some time before we are able to repair this damage.

On the twenty-sixth or twenty-seventh of June 1991, three or four days after this Government took over, I called for a meeting of the leaders of the Opposition Parties. My Finance Minister placed before them all the cards, the situation as it existed, as we inherited three or four days earlier. At the end of the discussion we arrived at some kind of an opinion, shared by almost every one, that there was no other way. That gave me the courage to go ahead (with the reforms). I have made it absolutely clear in both the Houses of Parliament and elsewhere that I am not depending on numbers, that I am not daunted by numbers. Even if I had 20 to 30 more seats in this House I would still go by the method of consensus because the time has come when the strength of number alone will not enable us to solve the problem; that we are facing today. I repeat that once again now. I will not go by the numbers. But, the number becomes certainly important when a situation like this arises. I never dreamt that number would ever become relevant in the five years of my term, but certainly the situation seems to have been forced on me, on this Government in eight months. I never thought that this would be the situation. But then there is

something like political impatience that has been built into the system, into our thinking, perhaps. Therefore, in spite of my best efforts, the impatience became too much and we are facing this scene today.

I would like to remind the House that we had to face a situation which was handed down to us. But that is only one part of the story. My case is not that I was merely pushed into a situation. What we are doing is exactly what we promised the people in our manifesto. Nothing more, nothing less. So, I am not ashamed of what has been done. I am not hesitating to reiterate that the programme that we have undertaken is what the Congress Party had promised to the people with which, incidentally, many other parties agreed in different degrees, but generally agreeing as a national consensus.

In fact, while formulating the nitty-gritty of our policy, we have taken the opinions given by other parties. It is not as if we have been impervious to opinions from the other parties. We have been responsive to all opinions, opinions which would fit into our own framework of the policy. If they did not, naturally we could not take that. This has been the position, this has been the *modus operandi*.

I would like to place the facts and figures before the House. They are verified and well authenticated. Foreign exchange reserves had declined to a perilous level at the time when we took over. It had happened despite the fact that the two previous Governments had drawn 2.4 billion dollars from the IMF from July 1990 to January 1991. They had drawn all that they could.

I am not blaming them at all. After all, what is the World Bank, what is the IMF? The World Bank belongs to India as much as the United Nations belongs to us. The World Bank and IMF have been approached for assistance not for the first time now. We have done it several times before. There is hardly any country which does not knock at the doors of the World Bank. Countries which are not members of the World Bank are now knocking at the doors of World Bank to gain entry. I would like to say that this prejudice or bias or opinion sought to be created against an international financial body is not in the interest of our country. Yes, we do not fully endorse the structure, the working of the Brettonwoods institutions. We have been constantly trying for the reform of these institutions, both in the Non-Aligned Movement and at the United Nations, and we will continue to do so. But to say that taking a loan from the World Bank or the IMF is by itself amounts to selling the country is something which is totally unacceptable. And I have to protest against this language being used against any Government,

particularly the Government belonging to the Indian National Congress, which brought us our Independence. It is absolutely uncharitable. I would like the honourable Members and the honourable leaders of the Opposition Parties to please consider how far it is appropriate to use a language of this kind. They may have differences; they may have very strong views. They are welcome to express their views but words like "sell out" is not worthy of them or their parties, or worthy of the country.

The Articles of Agreement of the IMF have this:

To give confidence to members by making the general resources of the Fund temporarily available to them under adequate safeguards, thus providing them with opportunities to correct maladjustments in the balance of payments without resorting to measures destructive of national or international prospects.

This is what the IMF is all about. Now, what have we gone to IMF for? It is precisely for this. It is well within the Articles of Agreement of the IMF.

Here is what we have about the World Bank :

To promote private foreign investment by means of guarantees of participation in loans and other investments made by private investors and when private investors and when private capital is not available on reasonable terms, to supplement private investment by providing on suitable conditions finances for productive purposes out of its own capital funds raised by it and its other resources.

Again, the World Bank is nothing but an institution which comes to the rescue, comes to the help of the countries which need assistance. It has happened before. We had taken a loan from the IMF. But we did not take all the tranches. We had taken one or two and when it came to the last tranche, our position improved, and Shrimati Gandhi, the then Prime Minister, said: "I need not take the last one; I will not; I will surrender it." It is up to us whether to take or not to take. The question is whether it is available.

An informal meeting of the Aid India Consortium was organised by the World Bank in April 1991. The consultations were held both with IMF and World Bank. The report of the discussions was that no fresh commitments of aid would be forthcoming until basic reforms were undertaken. The authority to go and negotiate with

the World Bank, Vishwanathji may remember, was given while he was the Prime Minister.

I am not blaming Vishwanathji, I am not blaming the Government that came thereafter—the Chandra Shekharji's Government—I am not blaming any of the previous Governments. What I am saying is that the situation that the country faced did not give us any option but to get assistance from the IMF. This is what I am saying.

I would like to refer to the statement made by the then Finance Minister in Chandra Shekhar Government in Parliament. He said:

“Today the soft options stand exhausted. It is now imperative for us to start making the necessary macro-economic adjustments. We should have no illusion that fiscal imbalances accumulated over several years can be eliminated at one stroke. But it is essential that we begin to introduce correctives. Even this will mean harsh decisions and difficult choices. If we are to restore the economic reform of the nation, we must face reality rather than ignore it. In this context we attach a very high priority to fiscal consolidation. Thus austerity would be the watch word of the Government, not simply in the current financial year, but also in 1991-92 and beyond. The Government would continue the process of fiscal corrections and consolidation from the next financial year. We hope to reduce deficit of the Central Government significantly...”—and here comes the magic figure—“So that it is about 6.5% of GDP in 1991-92.” Exactly the same figure which was inherited by Dr. Manmohan Singh. “Such a reduction would be the beginning of our transition to a sustainable fiscal regime over a period of three years in which the fiscal deficit returns to a range of three to four per cent of GDP as it was in the mid-70s. For this purpose the Government shall exercise a strict control over expenditure and rationalise subsidies, so that they are better directed towards the poor.... At the same time, the Government would improve the revenue collections, the combination of revenue and expenditure measures to achieve the desired fiscal correction. That will be formulated in the coming months and implemented.”

But, ‘the coming months’ saw a change of Government. That is all. However, the continuity is there. I am only trying to make a point that there was no alternative.

All the decisions and all the intentions of seeking assistance, seeking loans were common. It is not as if any new decision had been taken. This is one part of the story. The other part is, while we have inherited this situation, let me say that what we did was exactly the right thing and if I had not been convinced of what we

were doing, I would not have gone ahead. Our Government would not have done it.

What was being proposed was exactly in line with what we promised to the people and therefore we accepted it. That clinched the argument. If what we have said in our manifesto is something which people would not—some parties would not—agree, then the whole country is there to give a verdict.

So, the question of jeopardising the economic sovereignty of the country is totally irrelevant. It does not arise. I would like to say with all the emphasis at my command that this shall not be allowed.

But what is sovereignty? Sovereignty does not consist in not doing anything in times of peril. Sovereignty consists in keeping complete control over one's policies. The World Bank did not want me to do anything on the Public Distribution System. The World Bank did not say anything about anti-poverty programmes. If the World Bank tomorrow says that you should not have these programmes, I will say: "I am sorry, I must have these programmes whether you like it or not." So, the World Bank will not be able to interfere with my internal policy, economic policy to any extent. The World Bank certainly may have its conditionalities. I will accept them only if they suit me. I will not accept them if they do not suit me, if they go against my policy.

I do not think that the world situation, as I see it today, really points towards unlimited capitalism. I would not agree with that. And I would not agree to have that as a programme in this country. We will have to think of the pro-poor programmes. We will have to think of the massive poverty that is ailing the nation. There are two or three nations in the world having similar difficulty. Countries like Brazil also have the same kinds of difficulty. The advent of total capitalism will not be able to solve our problems. We are convinced of that. That is why we have to have a third way. That third way is that while we open up, while we become part of the world economy, we will have to have our programmes absolutely intact because we consider them absolutely necessary for our people. Therefore, there will be no dilution on that. We have deliberately included all the programmes for the poor in the budget. Some cuts have come, because cuts have come generally. If you do not have money, a little cut comes here, a bigger cut comes somewhere else. But we have also tried to make good the cuts in some other way.

Dr. Manmohan Singh explained how the cut of Rs. 500 crores in rural development has been more than made up by taking money from the National Renewal Fund and putting it exclusively for the

employment programme in the village. So, this package has now become better because if I had put Rs. 500 crores in general for rural development, they would have gone to different purposes. Now, this Rs. 500 crores or may be about Rs. 800 crores or a little more than that has been allotted specifically for employment generation programmes. There is a need for that today and we will certainly see to it that this money will be used only for that purpose.

The Public Distribution System is one of the most promising programmes for the poor. It is true that the Public Distribution System in this country has been working in a rather unsatisfactory manner. The Central Government does not run the Public Distribution System. It has to be run by the State apparatus and I am glad to say that when the National Development Council took up this matter, the Chief Ministers, belonging to all parties, expressed their readiness to co-operate in revamping this. Taking full advantage of it I went and inaugurated the revamped Public Distribution System in Rajasthan, not in Andhra Pradesh or Karnataka, because this is not really a party matter. I wanted to take one of the most backward areas. The Chief Minister of Rajasthan told me after that inauguration that he himself had visited several districts and he found that the programme, as revamped, has been working well. There may be some lacunae here and there. We are prepared to look into those things because any programme of this massive magnitude cannot be perfect all the time. If there is imperfection here and there, anything to be done by us, we will do it. If anything is to be done by the States, they will do it. This is one of the programmes in which the Government, both at the States and at the Central level, are working in unison, in tandem and with perfect co-operation and this is how it should be. This is going to be the real economic centre of tomorrow in the villages.

Besides food grains, including rice, wheat, and other things, more items have been added to what is being made available through PDS. The State Governments are negotiating with the producers and manufacturers to find out the possibilities of distributing things like match boxes, salt, etc. through fair price shops. May be it is a very unspectacular kind of programme. But this is the programme of tomorrow and this is the programme on which the entire economic activity of this country will rest. We have taken 1700 blocks and I would request the Members to find out how many of these blocks are in their constituencies. I would also request them to visit the shops and find out whether they are working well or not. If they are not working well, we have to

find out why they are not working well. This is the duty of all the Members.

Now, we have released four million tonnes of more food grains this year and still the stocks are low. We have to import. It has been done over the years. We have imported and exported. But the reason for exports is what is really relevant here. When the decision to export ten lakh tonnes of wheat was taken in 1990, it was not because we were overflowing with wheat. It was because we were in desperate need of foreign exchange. However, this is the kind of thing we should avoid. We should not dispose of our stocks; we should not allow our buffer stocks to come down under any circumstances. This is the lesson of the last two or three years. Therefore, we will have to take that as a policy postulate and we should always stick to it. Whatever happens on the food front, we should never be in any distress. This will be the policy of the Government.

On the industrial side, the investment climate has improved enormously and in the last few months since the new policy was announced we have had investment to the tune of Rs. 1,000 crores. In the next few weeks this figure is likely to jump from Rs. 1,000 crores to Rs.2,000 crores. All this is absolutely necessary for our Eighth Five Year Plan and the country's progress in general because 80 per cent of this investment is going to be in the infrastructure sector. If we are to fall back on our own resources this kind of investment would not be possible for the next 20 years. It is coming now. The power sector, the fertilizer sector, all the infrastructure sectors are being taken care of by this investment. And if investment comes from abroad to complete some of the schemes under the Eighth Plan, then whatever money that could be released from our own resources can go to anti-poverty programmes. This is the kind of tie-up which we want to do and we have taken a decision to that effect. We have told the Planning Commission that this tie up has to be properly planned.

The employment, aspect also has come up for lot of comments. The Railway Minister has announced that over 6,000 km of metre gauge will be converted into broad gauge. This is labour intensive programme. It has been estimated that each kilometre would generate 18,000 to 22,000 man days of employment. If we take up 6,000 km one can calculate how much employment it can create. The Planning Commission has given us some figures of employment: Agriculture—4.16 millions; Mining and Quarrying—0.13 millions, Manufacturing—1.36 millions, Construction—0.59 millions, Electricity—0.03 millions, Transport and Communication—

0.28 millions, and other services totalling up to 8.89 millions per year.

This is what we have promised more or less in the manifesto. Apart from this, a massive programme of afforestation and waste lands development is being undertaken. The cumulative effect of all these programmes can hardly be less than what we have promised to the people and that will be completed.

As for the educated unemployed, these cannot be useful for them. They have to be given opportunities for self-employment only in the context of rapid industrialisation of the country. I would like to know from any honourable Member or Economist, whether there is any other way. I do not see any other way except rapid industrialisation of the country.

In the agricultural sector, whatever is possible for self-employment will be taken up. At the same time, it is industrialisation that will do the trick in regard to employment opportunities in this country.

It was said that India is going to have the dubious distinction of having the largest number of illiterates at the turn of the century. From the President's Address, it appears that that dubious distinction is going to be averted. Literacy amongst girls is increasing. Where is it increasing ? It is increasing in the Northern States, not in Kerala. As for Kerala, the State is already well covered under literacy programme. Himachal Pradesh has done excellent work in literacy programmes. Other States also are coming up. So, at the end of the century, the future Indian citizen need not have to hang his head in shame that his country has the largest number of illiterates.

Now about the programme for the minorities. I would like to announce in the House that the Minorities Commission is going to be given statutory status in this session itself. Everything is ready and I am sure, we will be able to do that.

I have explained certain foreign policy aspects on several occasions in the House. There is only one important decision which seems to have created a difference of opinion and that is on having diplomatic relations with Israel. When we talk of recognising Israel, I do not know what the honourable Members really mean. Because we recognised Israel long ago when Panditji was alive. What we have now done is to have diplomatic relations. We have a Consulate already in Bombay.

Today, we have a situation where India's participation in the Middle-East process for the sake of fighting for the cause of the Palestinians has become more important than anything else. I do

not want to divulge personal discussions. But with a full sense of responsibility I would say that this is a decision which is going to be found very useful in the Middle-East process. We could have waited two more years. The only difficulty would have been that we would have been the only country left out. That kind of solution was not acceptable to us. And at the same time, the part that India will play in the Middle-East process will certainly make honourable Members on some occasion to compliment me for having taken the decision. Today, because of the difference of opinion that had existed, there seems to be some doubt in the minds of friends. Some friends really expressed those doubts to me. I have nothing to say about those doubts except to assure them that those doubts are unfounded. We stand by the Palestinian cause as strongly as ever before and this cause will be fully served by the decision taken by India and perhaps not so well otherwise.

I would like to conclude by saying that this question raised, the slogan that has been raised about some danger, some jeopardy, to the economic sovereignty of the country is rather unfortunate. I would like to refute it with all my might, with all the emphasis at my command and I am prepared for any test on this. What we have done is the right thing.

I have been addressing students, young men and villagers in their millions and I find that when they are told that the license-permit raj is coming to an end, and has come to an end, the kind of response I get from them is tremendous.

Yes, there is a change. There is a change in our orientation but there is no change in our objective. I want to make that absolutely clear. That objective remains. I cannot fulfill that objective by the old methods. I have to change the methods. The whole world has changed. All countries have changed. There is no justification for India not to change when the objective which we wanted to achieve by some other means till yesterday needs a different means today. That is the pragmatic approach which we have undertaken, without changing the objective, without giving up the objective.

I am fully convinced that what we are doing is the correct thing. If some one can convince this House, convince me, that is another way equally viable, equally effective in the world of today, I will not flinch from it. But I must say again and again that what I have done is the correct thing and this conviction has given me so much encouragement to go ahead with this programme. I want a national consensus that already exists. Consensus does not mean unanimity; unanimity minus a few individuals. But in spite of that, I have to say that this new reform package and the line we have taken has

the vast majority of the population of this country behind it, standing like a rock. It will be so and we will follow it.

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I AM GRATEFUL to the Members who have participated in this debate on the President's Address. They have made several points which need to be replied to.

One very serious objection has been raised about the Government policies to the effect that the country's economic sovereignty has been jeopardised. This is a serious allegation by any standards and this cannot be taken lightly either by the Government or by this House or by the country. But before making an allegation like this, it is also necessary to realise how serious it is and whether it was reasonable or justified to raise this point in the manner in which it has been raised. Of course, Members have the right to raise any point in any manner they like. But I would like to submit that the point has been raised in a non-serious manner.

There is absolutely no question of any Congress Party Government in India at any time—past, present or future—jeopardising the sovereignty of India, whether political or economic. That must be taken as absolutely final. There can be no question of playing with the economic sovereignty of India. I would like to assure this, I would like to make this statement, to whomsoever it may concern, all over the world.

It is well known what kind of a situation we inherited when we came to power in June 1991. It is also well known what situation the previous Government, headed by Shri Chandra Shekhar, inherited when they came to power. There is a continuity in all this. What has been happening is that the Governments, having been rather short-lived, did something. The rest was left to be done by the successor Government and it has fallen to my lot to complete what was started, say two years ago.

Coming to this aspect of what we inherited, I think the figures speak for themselves. We found that foreign exchange reserves had declined very considerably and this had happened despite the fact that the two previous Governments had drawn 2.4 billion dollars from the IMF from July 1990 to January 1991. Foreign banks were not willing to extend new credits. Non-resident Indians were taking their money out at the rate of about Rs. 150 to 200 crores every week. This was the situation. I really do not

want to blame any one. I am only placing the facts in the correct perspective.

I start with 1990. The Gulf crisis and the subsequent increase in the price of oil resulted in a major impact on the balance of payment and the fiscal situation of the country. The option to deal with this which included drawal of the CCFF (Compensatory and Contingency Financing Facility) of the IMF and authorising official level discussions for a Stand-by facility with the IMF were brought to the CCPA (Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs) on 6-10-1990. The matter was also brought to the attention of the Cabinet on 12.10.1990. On the basis of the approval of the CCPA, the Finance Secretary obtained approval of the Finance Minister for initiating discussions with a regular IMF mission visiting India at the end of October 1990. Immediately thereafter, it was proposed to send an Indian delegation to Washington for further discussions. This also was approved by the CCPA on 31.10.1990.

When it came to the next Government, the statement made by Yashwant Sinhaji in Parliament is all before us. He also gave a graphic description of the situation as he inherited it. When we came to power in June 1991, again it was a continuation. We found ourselves that two tranches of loan of 2.4 billion dollars had already been drawn which had less conditionalities and we were forced to go in for the remaining part of the loan which had, may be, more conditionalities. What was the alternative before us?

We had to make a choice, choose one course or another. It will be appreciated that during the last forty years or more, India's record in repayment of its loans has been absolutely impeccable. Our credit-rating has been uniformly high and there has not been a single occasion where we have defaulted even for a day. We have been very regular, very meticulous in keeping up our credit-worthiness, our *saakh*, because in the Indian mind this is a very important thing right from the village level. If the *saakh* is lost, everything is lost. We do not mind being poor, but we do not want to lose our *saakh*. No Indian would like to lose it. That is the national characteristic which has to be maintained by the Government also. Therefore, we were in no mood to let our credit-worthiness go down and let the record, the impeccable record, get tarnished. Regular repayments would continue, come what may. That was the bottom line. If we had not done it, if we had defaulted on our payment, apart from losing our credit worthiness, what would have happened? These would have been the economic consequences: Immediately a massive outflow of non-resident funds which were already on the way out. No new commercial loans for several years. Short-term trade credit to finance imports would have

no longer been available. All purchases would have had to be made on cash payment basis for which we did not have the foreign exchange. There would have been a massive disruption of imports. We would have had nothing to pay for kerosene, diesel, fertiliser, industrial and other raw materials. Domestic shortages would have intensified. Massive increase in unemployment would have occurred and inflation would have risen sky-high.

No one could deny that if we had defaulted at that point of time, these would have been the consequences. May be still more. I have only illustratively mentioned some. Therefore, any default then would have led to an unmitigated disaster and the Government naturally chose not to default. When you are not to default then you have to go to some one who is prepared to give you money to keep up your payments. In April 1991 the Balance of Payments position was found as bad as before. It did not improve. And an informal meeting of the Aid India Consortium was organised by the World Bank in April 1991. Consultations were held with both the IMF and the World Bank. The report of the discussions was that no fresh commitment of aid would be forthcoming until basic reforms were undertaken. In the notes for the introductory statements by the Finance Secretary and for his oral presentation, significant changes in trade, financial, industrial and public sector policies were mentioned which went further than earlier such proposals.

It was recognised that structural adjustment loans with the World Bank would be necessary. It was as clear as this in 1991. What was done later was in continuation of this. If there had been some differences in what was proposed, it was because of the fact that the earlier Governments were not ready with the full scheme; the later Government had to prepare the full scheme. So, it is only a continuation. I am not blaming anyone. I am only saying that there is a continuity and this continuity has to be understood.

In 1990, the process was started. It is not my fault or their fault that the Government did not continue long enough to take the other steps. So, this went on and it cascaded over the third Government, that is my Government, and I had to complete the process. Today, as a result of what we have done the disaster which was staring us in the face, I dare say, has been averted. We are not fully out of the woods. We cannot say that our position is absolutely unassailable. But, I would certainly say that the situation is a lot better than what we inherited and what was really imminent immediately after we took over. This is all I can claim in all humility and I do not think that this can be controverted. I would like the honourable Members to judge the situation as it existed in

June (1991) rather than after the worst is over. Today, everyone can talk with hindsight but this hindsight was not available when we took those decisions and from that point of view, I would like to submit that the decisions were right, the decisions were the only ones available to us. Not only that. The decisions were taken not out of sheer helplessness.

We have been exploring various possibilities within whatever time that was available to us. We explored then and we are still exploring. I didn't come across anything which is substantively better than what has been done. I am still saying that although we consider this policy absolutely right and we feel its irreversibility would be useful for the country, as we go along, we can always, make small corrections, mid-course corrections. That is always possible. But the point is, the direction has to be the same, the objective has to be very clear.

From the statement and from the letters etc. written to the IMF and the World Bank, this continuity comes out. Once this comes out, the bias which has been built up over the months that the World Bank is some alien monster sitting somewhere, out to rob us of our economic sovereignty, that bias could be removed.

India is one of the founder members of the World Bank. The World Bank is as much ours as the United Nations. Yes, we have criticised the working of the World Bank bitterly in the Non-Aligned Movement. In other fora, we have expressed our unhappiness over it. In the G-77 we have taken it up very strongly. With what results is a different matter. But the point is even today there is a volume of world opinion which says that the working of these institutions has to change, it has to be democratised. It has to be made available to the developing countries to a greater extent than before and the whole atmosphere has to change. That is a totally different matter. We will certainly continue to do what we have been doing on these fronts and we will not relent on that. But by painting the World Bank and the IMF black, the only institutions available for concession loans—in the open market you may have to pay three, four or even five times more interest—how are we going to profit by that? We must try to reform them, by all means. But you cannot paint them black.

Let us try to understand that these are institutions in which we have a stake as much as any other country and our money is there. In fact, in the first instalment what was really given to us was our own money. For that, there is no conditionality. If there is a structural adjustment loan, there will be conditionality. If you want something more, there will be more conditionalities. Suppose you go to a bank in a village and ask for a loan to buy a buffalo, there

will be an inspector to find out whether you have actually bought a buffalo or you have put a dog in the place of a buffalo or if the buffalo has been bought, has it been purchased in the names of ten, instead of one.

This is where our reform also is needed. If this is not being done properly, the banks would be losing and the banks are not charitable institutions. They have to work on the principles which all banking institutions recognise.

How many World Bank projects have been running in this country for the last 40 years? Are we not going to the World Bank, whenever we have a big project? What is happening to our international, bilateral projects like Karnal, like Pancheshwar etc.? If approaching World Bank is such a bad thing, why should we have gone to them persistently asking for their help.

We tell them we are going to do the following things. We tell them we will bring the fiscal deficit down to a particular level. Now, if we are living beyond our means, if we are getting Rs. 100 and spending Rs. 150 no bank is going to extol you for that and give you more and more loan. You wanted the loan. The loan is given subject to certain conditions. Those conditions are, by no means, derogatory to our sovereignty. It is a relation between the creditor and the person who takes the credit.

We have done many things which have nothing to do with either the conditions imposed by the IMF or even the ideas which they had in respect of our programmes. We have given a package of programmes which is not entirely based on what we told the World Bank or the IMF. We know that fiscal imbalance has led to price rise. We know that we have to protect the weaker sections of society at least in the short run, because they are the worst hit and that is why we have taken our own pro-poor anti-poverty programmes without reference whatsoever to what IMF or the World Bank might have said or might not have said. This is our policy package. And this is where I want to say that I am not really following them in many things. They would have wanted all the subsidies to go lock stock and barrel. Everybody knows it. They have been imposing these conditions. We have not accepted the conditions. In fact, I have gone to the extent of saying that in this country food subsidy is going to remain for a long time. And I have said it with the full concurrence of the Finance Minister. And so long as it is necessary, we will not do away with food subsidy. This is the first violation, perhaps the worst violations of what the IMF or the World Bank or any of those institutions could ever think of. They forget that they also have subsidies in their countries. But when it comes to us, they say something else. We will not accept these things. What

we should accept is what we consider good for our country. There is no question of our package being completely prescribed or given or handed over by somebody else to us. This is not so and it will never be so.

Take the revamped PDS in 1700 blocks. For the first time we have gone into the micro planning of the Public Distribution System. We have taken the poorest areas in the country because that is where we have to reach assistance. We have seen to it that a uniform price is fixed for commodities and insist upon a lower price in these areas than the price fixed for other areas. We have already introduced this. I have no doubt that in the next few months when the whole system when the whole scheme reaches and is in place, you will find the people of that area much better served. Particularly those in the remote areas where they have got very little so far. This is how, while we are opening up the economy integrating it with the world economy, we are also taking care of the most vulnerable sections of our population. This is a new package, a package which is all our own. This is not either a World Bank package or that of IMF. It is an Indian package all through. I do not claim that this is working 100 per cent well. Nobody can claim that. It is a question of all of us putting our heads together and finding ways and means of making it work. If there is any defect in the scheme itself you are welcome to tell where it has to be corrected, where the corrective has to be applied and it will be done. This is the way we are functioning and we are trying to involve everyone, the State Government, the Zila Parishads, the Panchayat Samitis, and all the machinery which is available down to the grass root level.

The food grain releases during the last nine months have amounted to more than four million tonnes. Our food position needs to be watched. While we are not really worried to that extent with the next crop, the wheat crop, we have to be careful because we have not drawn so much in the corresponding period of any previous years. This is something which needs to be understood, needs to be remembered because we want more and more grain to come to the PDS. It has come and it has had some effect, some beneficial effect, may be not to the extent we want because if we had 10 million tonnes, then that would have been different. But this is not possible. That is why some proposal to import wheat has also been considered. It is in the pipeline at the moment. We had decided in 1990 to sell 10 lakh tonnes of wheat. I have gone into those papers and I find we wanted to sell wheat not because we were having very great stocks with us but we were desperately in need of foreign exchange.

This has been the lot of all the colonies. They only sell their raw materials. Incidentally, I am told—I am ashamed to say that—we have been overdrawing and over-exporting our best iron ore, the Bailladilla iron ore. We should cry a halt to this and the Government has taken a decision that henceforth there will be no new contracts for exporting our iron ore, whatever the quality of iron ore we have. We will have to think of planning an industry in order to use that rather than sending it out. If they (importing countries) can use it, I don't see why we cannot use it. It is only a question of technology. We will get the technology, we will develop the technology; otherwise, it will remain for posterity. Why should we really over exploit our resources? Now, this is the kind of approach we have taken, and I am sure we will have technology coming from abroad and that is the real intention of opening up.

You cannot get this technology for money or love, unless you allow someone to come here, make a joint venture, give you the technology as part of the condition. They will come. They are coming. I am glad to say that in the last four or five months, the amount of industrial investment which has been promised, which has been committed to India is really phenomenal.

In this regard I have made comparisons with other countries, as big as ours. I do not want to name the countries. The comparative figures show that the willingness to come to India has been markedly better than to any other country. In the comparable period of last year—I think it was brought out in one of the answers to the questions in this House—Rs. 74 crores of investment was promised; this year within the same period we have touched Rs. 1,000 crore. In the next one or two weeks, if everything goes well and if we do not find anything very bad in the proposals that we have, we hope to clear another Rs. 1,000 crores worth of industrial investment. The industrial climate has improved. The willingness to come here has improved. Whenever I went abroad, I said: “I am not in competition with any other country”. People asked me: “How do you expect people (investors) to come to India when so many other countries are competing with you, the countries of the erstwhile Soviet Union, East Europe, East Germany, etc”. I said: “I am not in competition with any other country. I stand on my own merit and the industrialists everywhere in the world know what the merits of India are in the matter of investment.” What the hurdles have been, they know. They also know that the hurdles are being removed.

When the hurdles are removed what surfaces is the plus points of India as a place for investment and I am sure that they (investors) will come. The climate is good, the outlook is good, only we should

not create a situation where the stability of the country, of the society, of the Government is somehow seen as wobbling. There is no wobbling here. This Government with willing support and willing co-operation and functioning on the basis of consensus that all have accepted, will continue with the same stability as any other Government had done in the past, barring the immediate two preceding. There will be no difficulty and there will be the kind of graph, the graph of economic progress going up steadily as it had gone up in the past. And I would expect the honourable Members—I won't just say co-operate, I would say—to be partners in this. The achievement will be everybody's. I am not opposed to anybody. I am not opposed to any party or group. Today we have to do things in a different manner where the whole country would see us as one. All the parties have to be seen doing something together. In spite of the fact that we have different outlooks, different programmes, different ideologies, still in this great work of reconstructing the country, bringing it up from a very difficult situation, we are all one. This is the impression we have to create. In fact, we will create the impression by accomplishing it. Not by creating false impressions. They will be seen through. You have to do it substantively. And that is my appeal to the House.

Some comments on employment were made. The next Five Year Plan, the Eighth Plan, which is going to be launched on 1 April has employment as one of its very important objectives. Employment has to be of many kinds. Employment at the village level is something which we all know. In Maharashtra, we have the Employment Guarantee Scheme. It is working well. There are some defects. But on the whole it has been working well for a long number of years. Now, in a thing like the Employment Guarantee Scheme, whether you have the guarantee part of it or not, the employment has to be on that scale. Otherwise, you will not be able to guarantee anything. The Railway Minister has made an announcement that 6,000 km of Metre Gauge will be converted into Broad Gauge. This is essentially a labour-intensive scheme and it is going to be taken up all over the country. Wherever you have the Metre Gauge, this programme will be taken up there. One of the programmes which will generate or is bound to generate massive employment is this. Then we have the other programme of Jawahar Rozgar Yojana. This also has been looked into more carefully. It has been evaluated and we have the results of the evaluation. We are looking into this. And I am sure every effort will be made to improve the Yojana.

We will pump more funds into the Yojana. I promise that if we are able to get foreign investment to take over some of the Plan

schemes for which we are not finding the money fully, any money, any amount of money, which is released thereby will again go to the villages for the anti-poverty programmes. Now we will plan the investment in such a way that the bulk of it will go to the unviable sections of society in order to make them viable. There will be housing programmes, there will be road programmes, there will be wage programmes, and within that we will see that we do not have any real poverty, the kind of poverty, the type of indigence that you see in some of the villages of India. I visited some of the countries where people are poor but not poor like us. There is a difference between this poverty and the poverty which you find in other countries. Now, the nature of poverty has to change in the sense that the viability of the poorest of the poor has to improve. How much you will improve will depend on how much money you can pump in, on how much you can organise. But the point is that the last person should feel that his lot today is a little better than what it was yesterday and that is where the improvement, the development has to start. This is going to be the thrust of the Eighth Five Year Plan.

We have a very large programme of Waste Land Development. Waste Land Development in this country has run into difficulties again. I know something about it because I was dealing with the Youth Projects. Wherever, we wanted these projects to be taken up, there have been some hurdles. We have some success stories, a few success stories combined with many stories of failure. Now, these will have to be completely streamlined, and I am glad to say that we have some old stalwarts who have been working on these schemes and they have given advice to us. The Planning Commission is coming up with a new package of employment schemes in this country in which Waste Land Development has also been included. This is going to be a kind of new approach to employment development and I can give the details a little later when the whole thing is ready. But what I am trying to impress upon the House is that we are taking up employment programmes in a big way and the idea is to make the poorest man a little more viable than what he is today.

As far as the problem of educated unemployed, I do not see any other way out except through rapid industrialisation of the country. That is what we are trying to do. So, from all sides, from the bottom to the top, including the middle rungs, we have to take care of all the sections of society and only then real progress would be possible.

On prices certain promises were given. It was said that prices of ten commodities will be brought to a particular level. Out of ten,

eight have not changed. More or less we have done what we said we will do. On rice and wheat, the situation has not been brought under control as we wanted to. I agree. And for that, in order to protect the most vulnerable sections, we have to make a sort of priority. I would like to tell those who have studied our manifesto that the item on Public Distribution System occurs in the four-year box. We had provided one thousand days to do it; but we have started doing it in 60 days. That is the kind of urgency we have woven into this item, because the prices were not coming down and we had a problem there.

As much as Rs.300 crores have been set apart to see that prices are brought to a uniform level over the entire area of 1700 blocks. We are monitoring it on a day to day basis, from point to point, stage to stage, item to item. I do admit that there are still a large number of loopholes to be plugged. I would like the honourable Members to appreciate the situation in which we were, the situation to which we have come to and where we really wish to go. That is to be the goal, common to all of us, with a little variation in details. But the goal has to be the same and if we can project this image of a single common goal before the entire population of India, then, I think, more than half the battle is won, because India will be seen as a nation really on the move.

On external affairs, one point that has been raised is about the establishment of diplomatic relation with Israel. I would like to submit to the House that this decision was taken, after due deliberation, after all the pros and cons were gone into. We had leaders from the area visiting India during those days. I am not quoting other leaders to justify our decision; that is not proper. But we were in touch with all the concerned interests, our friends, and we came to the conclusion that it is better for India not to get isolated in the process of the Middle-East. There may be shades of difference in this opinion, say about the timing. Some might ask: "Why did you not wait for six months more?" On the other side it was asked, "Why did you wait so long?" So on both sides, there could be differences. But, from my point of view, after due deliberation—even the day on which we made the announcement had some significance—after calculating the psychologically right moment, we made the announcement. It is not that we are recognising Israel for the first time. Israel stands recognised already; for many decades it has been so. We have had only consular relations with Israel. What we have done now is to start diplomatic relations. The dividends of this decision, the benefits of this decision, are not merely to India but to the entire Middle-East process where we have always been playing the role of a champion

of rights and also as a country, as a Government which stands for justice. This role is very important. It is not being resented by any of the parties. If we are saying we want the Palestinian rights to be realised, the Israelis are not criticising us for that. I mean, this is the role which India can play and, perhaps, not many besides India can play. So, it is our duty to enter this arena at a time when a conciliatory role by India is of essence. And that is why we have taken this decision.

Need for Implementing Land Reforms

I EXTEND A hearty welcome to all of you at this Conference of "Land Reforms and Land Records." I specially welcome Chief Minister of Punjab who is representing the State, after a long time. I do hope that many of the problems which can be tackled only by a popular government will now become easier of solution. The Governor had done a good job, successive governors have done well. But there is a limitation on what the governor can do and beyond those limits it has to be only a popular government. So, I am glad that he has attended this Conference, he has taken special interest in this subject and I hope it will be possible for Government of Punjab, State Government of Punjab to show results.

My colleague Mr. Venkataswamy has already placed before you the outline of the deliberations which you are going to have. I don't have to repeat all that he has said. But let me start by asking why has this Conference become necessary? The Central Government has nothing to do with land reforms. According to the Constitution they fall completely within the purview of the State Government. Why would I go out of the way to call all of you. It is not my constitutional responsibility. It is yours. After 40 years, and if you ask me it is much more longer than 40 years because land reforms was one of the accepted programmes of all the political parties even before Independence, after all these years, if we still find ourselves talking in terms of what we said say 50

years ago or 60 years ago, I think there is something seriously wrong. And it is to nobody's credit that after 40 years we are still having a conference on land reforms, which means that what we promised, all the parties, to the people before independence, after independence, election after election, has not been done.

Or what has been done is only a part. So I want an end to these conferences. If I could make this the last conference to be ever held in Delhi, I would be happy. What I want now is total implementation, within a time-frame fixed by us today. We had told the Chief Ministers that all the surplus land available under the land-ceiling laws in the States should be distributed before 31 March. Now the record which I have before me very clearly indicates that we are nowhere near that. It is possible that these are some special difficulties, it is possible that in some cases it may take a longer time. Now it is in connection with that this Conference has been called. We don't want to call the Chief Ministers all over again. Atleast the revenue Ministers would tell us that what has really held up this programme, after the Chief Ministers, took it up, after the Chief Ministers gave me an undertaking that this will be done. I didn't impose it on them. I just suggested and they readily accepted. So, after your respective Chief Ministers have agreed to it, what is it that has stopped you from doing it, from completing or fulfilling the undertaking given by the Chief Ministers? This is what we really want to know.

I want to know what the agrarian structure in this country is going to be ultimately. I want to know that in a particular village, all the land that is to be made available to the landless has been made available and if there are any more landless people, and I am sure in every village there are going to be lots of other landless people who have not got any land under the Land-ceiling Act, then you will have to think of something else for them. In every village while some land is still to be distributed, every landless person thinks that he will get a part of it, and such persons will go on waiting indefinitely. So, let us finalise the whole thing. Let the final picture emerge that in village A—there is no land available, in village B—there is a little land but only two persons can get it, only two families can get it, the rest will have to be considered for something else. Because everyone has to live. How many can live on land? How many can get this distributed surplus land. Now in every village you find that there is a total confusion about how many are going to get it. Everybody expects that he would get it but I am sure not all of them are going to get. So, we should know. You have to reshape the economy of the villagers. You start with land. Once the land available is disposed of then you

know what to do with the rest. You have to put them on project, you have to put them on some programmes which give them work and wages. Ultimately the aim is to improve the lot of the villagers. But you get more and more population year after year. People who ask for some kind of livelihood are increasing every year. Therefore, in order to have manpower planning done properly we want to know from the Chief Ministers, from the States that there is no more land available for re-distribution.

Then I can tell the Planning Commission to take all these facts into account and see that we go down to the micro-planning at village level and we think of other programmes in which the people who could not get land can be engaged. In many states you find that you give him a piece of land this year, he sells it by next year. Even for two or three years, he is not able to keep the land because he does not have bullocks, he does not have plough, he does not have any of the wherewithal which are needed for tilling the land and living on the land. We have not been able to make this land allottee a viable farmer. Farming also needs capital, skill and management. Now, if he is not having all these then evidently he will not keep the land. This has happened in lakhs and lakhs of acres in this country and you have on papers said that you have distributed so much land. Much of it has gone back into the hands of those who already have enough land. This is how the area of land in the possession of each land holder has increased and still most of them are under the ceiling. There has been an automatic adjustment of land distribution in the villages. Has anyone kept track of all that is happening? Can you change this land into the hands of those who have bought it? If you know the problem, you will know how to tackle it. I am sorry that we have not been able to attend to this problem in all its details.

Then we have the age-old problem of land-records. Each state, each district has its own method, each tenor has its own method of land-record. In some areas it is Bighas, in some areas it is acres, in some areas it is hectares, in some areas it is katthas and so on. Now, there is absolute confusion in this. For thirty-years atleast this matter has been raised by many State Governments.

The Central Government did not really take into account the need for updating, modernising land reforms. The Central Government can at the most make some help available to the State Governments but the work has to be done by the State Governments. And while you are doing it, is it possible to have a near uniform pattern of land records, maintenance of land records of the country? May be someone has gone into it, may be not, but it is time someone goes into this and we know what the position of the land

holdings is at a given point of time. This will be possible only when you streamline the maintenance processes of land records in the country.

Coming to land and land revenue, they have become less and less important in the scheme of things. For the State Governments land revenue is a very small amount now. It used to be a big amount about twenty years ago. Now it is sales tax, excise and all the rest of it. And, therefore, in some States even land revenue on dry land has been completely remitted. Now that may be good, that may be bad, I am not going into the merits of that. But one horrendous thing that has happened is the man does not have any thing to show that the land belongs to him. In the Khasra, or any of the land records his name is not entered because he does not have to pay anything. No land revenue to be paid, therefore, the Patwari or anyone who is working there does not bother. With the result that heads are being broken and litigation, for the sake of landholding and land possession goes on. The borders of land, land boundaries, everyone of these matters is becoming a law and order problem in the villages.

Many Chief Ministers told me that even if they do not receive any money out of land revenue, they would like someone to keep the land records because it is a record of rights. Any person who has muscle-men with him can go and occupy anybody's land. Now this kind of anarchy has to be avoided at all cost and if land records, the maintenance of land-records can help in this, this will have to be done. I have no doubt that this has become a great necessity in the agrarian structure of today. We had, as you know, the great Saint Vinobaji starting the Bhudan Movement in the early fifties. Now I happen to come from the area where the Bhudan Movement was started. I was with him visiting some villages, listening to him, getting inspiration directly from him. The village where it was started is not very far from Hyderabad. I know everyone in that area. The kind of enthusiasm which we showed at that time for this new Movement was because of the fact that this was seen as an alternative to the communist movement that was sweeping the area at that time. The communist movement had an element of confrontation in that. I do not go into, whether it was good or bad, I am only telling you a historical fact. With the advent of the Bhudan Movement people could see an alternative emerging, a peaceful alternative emerging where a land holder surrenders his land to the landless voluntarily and says, "Well here it is, I don't want it, I would like to give it to the landless." But then our landlords are so clever. Most of them disposed of their useless lands, all kinds of rocky-soils and so on where nothing

grows and they have put it in the Khatah of Vinoba Bhave. So, the great saint that he was, he thought that he had collected lot of land but when we went into the details, I was one of the members of the land distribution committee at the Talluka level, so I am telling you from my own experience and not from any hear say, the landlords even defrauded Vinoba Bhave to some extent. But then there were others who were genuine donors, they donated very good, excellent land in the villages for the landless. Then came the problem of distribution. We have some laws, we had some rules. Under those rules some distribution was done, some was not done. The whole thing today appears to be very unsatisfactory. A great saint starts a Movement and like all great Movements this Movement also seems to have run into difficulty. Now we will have to do something about it. As Government, as State Government, as people responsible, at least respond to this great Movement started by a great man. I want to know what is the position of the land holding in areas like Bihar, Rajasthan etc. The large tracts of land were donated under the Bhudan Movement. That is the next one which you will have to look into and, of course, the main thing for which you have come is to review the distribution of land to the landless under the land-ceiling. What is the position today? Why is the performance during the last six months, or five months so poor and what you can do to make it more efficient and to complete it within stipulated time. These are the three main objects. Of course you can go into many more aspects but I don't wish, the time of this conference to be taken up by other matters. There is the philosophical aspect of whether land can become the basis of ownership, whether anybody can really say this land belongs to him, whether it has to be tenor. Ultimately the theory seems to be that all land belongs to God, all land belongs to the crown, all land belongs to the Government and who till the land are only Pattedars. The Patta is only a lease. So every holder of land has a lease from the Government. That is one way of looking at it. There have been lots of pronouncements of the courts on this but we don't have to go into that. Maybe at some other time, maybe at some other level these things will have to be gone into but these three practical aspects of land reforms which need to be gone into apart from the tenancy laws. There is lot of confusion in the tenancy laws, some laws are effective, some are not. In some States it has been done properly. In others, it has not been done properly. That again is a big question. Then we have the question of Benami transactions. This was brought to my notice just now. Wherever a land reform has been attempted, land ceilings have been attempted we have seen, we have come to know that large tracts of land have been entered in the names of unborn sons and

grandsons, dogs, cats and so on. So all kinds of things have been done in this. Can we really go into those details? What is the situation in different States in regard to Benami transaction. You could give us some idea because nobody knows unless you go deeper into the matter. How do you know that it is Benami? It is written in the name of some person, say Moti, that Moti can be a dog, a cat or whatever. Now, this is why, it is not easy for you to give any facts and figures here. You will have to think of some method to detect these things and what is to be done on this. You can give your views. Maybe we will have another meeting only on this or may be the Minister of State can discuss with the State Government individually and see if even at this later stage something could be done about this.

So, these are all the matters which I wanted to place before you, I only want this meeting to be a business like meeting. I have been told that you will be meeting in the afternoon on these three subjects—the distribution of surplus land, Bhudan Lands, and land records. If you could have some business-like way of dealing with these by having three sub-committees and come up with recommendation, we can take final decisions and start implementing them.

Towards a New Human Destiny

TO COME TO Visva-Bharati is to come to a universal home. It is a pilgrimage. In the inner quietude of this vast and beautiful expanse, we hear the words of silence; and we seem to be transported into the age of the Upanishads. It is in such an environment that the ancient Rishis transmitted knowledge to their disciples. We begin to have visions of the sages sitting in their groves ready to teach and test the seeker, the typical figures of Janaka, Ajata Shatru and Yagnavalkya, of Satyakama, Aruni and Shvetaketu. And we seem to listen to the exhortations of the teacher to the pupil, “*Satyam Vada, Dharmam Chara, Swadhyayat ma Pramadah,*” [speak truth, walk in the way of the duty, neglect not the study]. A new shaft of light seems to come upon us awakening our spirit and inspiring us to strive and to realise.

We need this light, we need this inspiration. The world is changing fast, and we need to understand where we are and whither we are going. The message of Gurudev which has been relevant to all times is now even more compelling. He has shown that problems have deeper causes and deeper remedies. And this insight is of the essence today. But I am not sure that too many people care to appreciate this particular relevance, beyond the formal encomiums paid to all great men more as a compelling duty and conformist ritual.

Looking back half a century, I have to confess that throughout our existence, we have lived through a series of beliefs, dogmas, abstractions and rhetorics. Ideas have assumed the dimension of ideologies, each claiming to be definitive, holding all the answers to all questions—past, present and future. The Indian mind—ever open and resilient for as long as one can remember—has tended to become closed and unopenable.

The reason is not far to seek. The world, always a jigsaw puzzle that had baffled innumerable thinkers down the centuries, suddenly became simple by getting divided into blocs.

Thereafter, it was apparently easy for everyone. You adopted the thinking of the bloc you belonged to; your bloc projected your thinking more effectively than you could ever hope to do individually. You were thus spared the trouble of thinking for yourself and the bother of explaining anything beyond repeating the rhetoric of the bloc to which you belonged. The bloc was always right, and so you were always right too. Anyone in the other bloc was, by definition, completely wrong, of course, QED. It was an amazingly simplistic resolution of right and wrong perceived and articulated for several decades. Greatmen like Jawaharlal Nehru did refuse to be slotted in the blocs, but that is a different story.

The bloc configuration is no longer there, at least in its old forms, ideological profiles and unbending rhetorics. The tension attending the bloc phenomenon has also, by and large, abated. A mere description of that tension no longer sounds like profound wisdom. In a single phrase, there has been a sea change in the world—breathtakingly swift, bewilderingly complex. Meanings have changed in mid-sentence. Punctuation has become a problem.

And yet, in this great process of change, a few subprocesses have become necessary. The first is to arrive at a neutral frame of mind wherein the shibboleths of yesterday are laid to rest and dogmatism is replaced by rationality. The attitude of assumed omniscience yields place to a spirit of enquiry—humble, yet sharp and relentless. " तद्विद्विप्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया "

In the learning process, " स्वाध्यायान्मा प्रमदः " has become the most significant directive once again, after decades of short-cuts, made-easy books, simplified notes and, finally, leaked question papers. The new question paper the world has to answer today has no simple or ready-made solutions available, for love or for money. We have to begin at the beginning. The generation charged with this task is indeed fortunate; it can begin on a clean slate and with a fresh mind, re-opened for those who have closed it. It can even choose the slate, so complete is its freedom.

This is where I see the compelling need for the reappearance of Gurudev—in a reincarnation appropriate to the new situation with which the world finds itself contending. But it is not enough to have a Guru. Shedding its assumed all-knowing arrogance, society too has to become a learning society. In this society the chief concern will be not to multiply individual wants and the means of their satisfaction, but to strive to make the individual increasingly responsive to legitimate societal needs. Nevertheless, it is the individual who responds, expanding into the concentric circle of the family, the mohalla, the village, the district, the state, the nation and the world—in that order. Any other order will only bring disorder, as one can easily see. And the individual should not get submerged and suppressed into non-existence. There should be a full stop to the perpetration of inverted non-democratic structures, whatever the pretext.

Our problems are comparatively well-known, with no mystery about them; but they are quantitatively stupendous. The social pyramid is very high between its top and its base. The layers between the two are too impervious to allow anything to trickle down. Interception is so rapid, so complete *en route*, that very little, if any, is seen reaching the bottom, the vast and varied base. The routes we have adopted so far have led to several dead ends and have bequeathed a baffling unfinished task on our hands. We have to reach the base, and quickly too; else, the top will blow up.

The cloud sends but a little water down; not much because it is not rich in water. But whatever is sent evaporates in the heated atmosphere. How can the parched earth ever get any rain? The drought thus continues.

You build a reservoir. You construct canals and subcanals. But they are all lined with hot sand. The water is let out of the reservoir, but never reaches the field and the farmer starves. The phenomena are known. The result is also known. But the remedies suggested and adopted have not succeeded. Someone wanted the cloud to be destroyed. Someone wanted the reservoir to be bombed out. Someone wanted the top of the pyramid to be blasted. Someone,

on the other hand, wanted the base to be left severely alone, to die due to benign neglect. All of them perhaps missed a single, simple fact that the pyramid is single, integrated, inseparable whole.

Place this dilemma before a simple villager to consider. His invariable prescription would no doubt be: Why not begin at both ends, with primacy to the more gigantic base? Why not start at the grass roots too, along with the top and the other layers? Why not become a travelling salesman who visits every house or hut, instead of the posh showroom keeper who waits for every customer to visit him?

This is the composite macro-cum-micro approach, with proper linkages and by-passes, that could yet indicate the direction mankind has to take, in order to achieve a total transformation. And nothing short of being total will enable any transformation to become meaningful.

And here is the point to remember. In the location of Visva-Bharati, Gurudev fully recognised the grass roots approach. He began to illumine the base of the pyramid, symbolically as well as substantively. It needed to spread, but perhaps it did not. The light homed in on the centre, it did not proceed to the vast and dark circumference. A stupendous task was left to the successors. If the task gets done, ever so little, it will be the vindication of Gurudev's vision. If it stays at the centre, it will still be a great institution, albeit within its confines. Please ask yourselves: Which has it been? Which shall it be?

My illustrious predecessor-Chancellor, the late Shri Rajiv Gandhi, had said at the Convocation three years ago, "Rabindranath Tagore did not see Santiniketan Visva-Bharati as a static organisation. He saw it as dynamic and evolving with the circumstances and changes as they took place. It was not the same Visva-Bharati that was founded and that was there at the time of Rabindranath Tagore's death." Much less can it be the same Visva-Bharati today, almost half a century after his demise. Yet, it is this dynamism and capacity to change that emboldens me, the current Chancellor, to say confidently that this great centre of learning could succeed in updating what Rajivji said three years ago; so much has happened in these brief three years.

The old blocs have disappeared, yet no one can claim that the world is without blocs of any kind now. Armaments have diminished, overall, but the world is far from being weapon-free and non-violent. Confrontation has abated, but co-operation is nowhere in sight. Whichever way one looks at it, the malady has become less visible, but it is by no means eradicated. Uni-polarity does not spell equality. Resolution of problems has been found.

infeasible by confrontation. But the spirit of open minded consensus needed for the resolution of problems without confrontation is far from being a reality. Meanwhile, problems change their shape, but do not go away.

I would, therefore, like to point out that this complex transitional situation imposes upon us very difficult tasks, and the burden of thinking through these tasks has to be shouldered by pioneering institutions like Visva-Bharati. That Gurudev established this great institution and that he laid the foundations of creative enquiry and deep reflection by his genius has to be looked upon as a boon bestowed by him upon posterity to which we belong. Nurtured as this institution was by minds characterised by vision and catholicity over the decades, I believe it can rise to the occasion. It is now for us to demonstrate that we shall imbibe in our life the spirit and mandate given by Gurudev and contribute to the process of stabilising the faltering steps that humanity takes in the impending journey through uncertainty, towards the odyssey to a new human destiny.

I congratulate the students who are receiving their degrees and eminent scholars who are receiving honours at this Convocation. I have no doubt that the students who have had the great privilege of living in this beautiful garden of learning must have learnt the lessons both of academic and cultural life in the manner that is expected of them. But I should like to tell them that education is a life-long process and that the lessons of Gurudev have to be learnt throughout our lives. I do hope that they will continue to shape their life in the image of the ideals of Visva-Bharati and that they will be enthusiastic participants in the great change that is coming in our country and all over the world.

Exploring the Sources of Energy

I AM HAPPY to join you at this fag end of the Conference. In spite of my best efforts, this is all the time I could find. That does not mean that I don't attach any importance to this Conference or to the subject of this Conference.

Address to the valedictory session of the State Power Ministers' Conference, New Delhi, 4 April 1992

Power generation and the availability of power over the coming years has been foremost on my mind and my friends know, my colleagues know, to what extent I have been trying to remove the impediments about which you have spoken and about which I have full knowledge. For each project, I am calling a meeting at my level only to find that the representatives of Ministries and Institutions come and start arguments afresh in my presence. Sometimes it becomes very difficult for me to spend time in argumentation because that is not what I am supposed to do. I am supposed to look into the options open to the Government, apply my mind and say this is the option which appears to me to be the best, so, go ahead and do it, whereas I should be clinching the argument and taking decision based on the options placed in front me. It has happened quite a number of times that the arguments continue there and I am not able to do anything beyond spending time where I should not be spending time. So I have been little firm on this. I have told the Ministries, I have told the representatives of Public Sector Undertakings also not to continue this kind of ding-dong battle. We know we have a Public Sector and we do not want that Public Sector to suffer.

We know that we want power and we don't want the country to suffer. Now, if this is so, then there should be a way out and the way out is that what we cannot make in this country, what we cannot produce in this country and still what we need badly for the next five years, ten years, it should come from elsewhere. It is that simple to me. I am quite clear in my mind that while our internal capacity has to be fully utilised, if that is not enough to meet our needs and obviously it is not, it should come from wherever it is available. This is a very clear policy and a decision which I would like to implement. I think there should be no misgiving on this, there should be no doubts on this.

The only question apart from the subjects on which you have passed resolutions and about which the Secretary tells me that there the response is positive—I am happy about it—the only question which is presenting a difficulty to you, to me and to everyone is one of environment. I am glad that Kalpnathji thinks that for the first time God's existence has been proved today when all hell broke loose and still we are continuing with the Conference, only by grace of God. Now, it looks that people are very strongly feeling about clearances from the environment side. I find that the environment people also are equally, if not more, worried about what is being said about them, against them and also in regard to the environmental problems. Now, I must tell you that we have to

be acting very responsibly on this because we are going to lead the discussion in favour of environment at the conference in Brazil just about two months from now on behalf of the developing countries. This is a great responsibility and if we don't discharge it properly then the entire Third World will stand to lose in the decade to come.

The main international controversy, the main international problem that needs to be resolved and that too in a co-operative manner without rhetoric, without any blocs, without any bi-polar approaches is the environmental problem. We have to resolve it so as not to harm the interests of the developing countries and on us to some extent devolves the responsibility of doing so. While going to that Conference or while pleading the case of the developing countries, India cannot afford to go with a sort of soiled record, with a record which will make our argument sound weaker, sound hollow.

I don't want any project to be held up for all time—for seven years, eight years, nine years. If we can't decide in six months, we can't decide in six years, that is clear to me and the result is only the cost overrun, the time overrun. And perhaps what was possible six years ago has become less possible, more difficult, much more expensive in six years. So, even if we are going to give the clearance today, this clearance is going to be much costlier than the clearance if we had given it six years earlier. With this I entirely agree and I have taken some steps.

I have got a full list of the projects that need clearance. The whole list is with me and out of them I am told that some projects whose number is about nine or ten out of 78 are ready in all respects. You know environment is one of the factors which is some times used as an excuse. You ask him about a project, he may talk of environmental aspect. In fact, the project is not fully ready and still environment is sighted as a pretext. This also I have seen. So I am not saying that this is so in all cases but it is evident from the fact that out of 78 pending cases there are only ten or eleven or twelve which are ready in all respects so that if I give the clearance today the work can start tomorrow. That is not the case with the rest of the projects. I would very respectfully submit, that you kindly leave the environmental aspect to me and go ahead completing the other details of the projects. We will do it in record time. Even these nine or ten which were brought to my notice just about a week ago in our meeting, I promise you that these will be decided in record time. I have absolutely no doubt about that, I don't have anything to gain, no one has anything to gain by procrastination or just

keeping it in cold storage. I can assure you that these will be decided upon.

Whether clearance will be given or not given will depend on the merit of the project. We will go into the merits and if it cannot be given, I will tell the Chief Minister with folded hands that this can't be given for the following reasons. So, they will have to think of alternative avenues. Now, this is what we are going to do. I don't know how long it will take. Final decisions in regard to these ten projects will be taken within one month and you will hear from us. I feel very strongly about projects being kept in cold storage without deciding one way or the other. In fact, I have expressed my displeasure on some of the things which have been done and I hope these will not recur again.

Now, having said that about the other projects I am not quite sure who is going to complete the formalities, the modalities and other examination of the project but that perhaps will be between the Central Government and the State Governments or the Electricity Boards and so on. But one thing is clear that what you have decided about the Electricity Boards is very timely and there is no way we can continue to spend money on power generation in this country if the return is going to be as it has been so far.

In Davos and other places I have spoken to many people from other countries, experts in the field of power generation, companies, representatives of companies. I have found a peculiar reluctance on their part to come to India for power generation. The reason is simple, they say that there will be no return. This money we don't think we will be able to recover because the performance of the State Electricity Board is such that it is not possible for us to choose India in preference to other countries when we know fully well that the returns are not going to be certain or not going to be to our satisfaction or to our expectation. Whatever you might say on paper, this may not happen, this is the kind of misgiving they have. I must make it clear to the friends here and this will have to be looked into.

If three per cent, as you have decided here, is going to do the trick, the other part of the trick will not take much time. We can tell them that now we have tied up everything, that the performance of the Electricity Boards will be such as to enable them to repay and not default on what they have to do. If this assurance can go from here, I am quite sure that the response from international investors will be quite encouraging. This is what I concluded at that time. I am glad that you have passed this resolution. Of course, passing a resolution is not really doing it but at least it is a good beginning. Once you have done it, I think efforts will be made, we

will have to be talking to the State Electricity Board and representatives of State Governments on how this resolution is to be implemented. If it is implemented, I am sure that the prospect of getting power generation projects from outside will become bright.

Now, one aspect of energy which I wanted very much to bring before you and about which I am quite assiduously studying is the renewable sources of energy, the non-conventional sources of energy and in particular solar energy. I have had several meetings here and abroad on that aspect. It looks a very tiny thing right now, it looks like a poor relation nobody bothers about. I would like to say that that is going to be the source of the future and we will have to step up our effort, our investments particularly on R&D and our manufacturing capacity in that field.

Incidentally, I may tell you that in the G-15 meeting held in Caracas recently, India has taken upon itself the responsibility of giving a lead in the the non-conventional sources of energy to develop them and to make them available to the Third World Countries. I am sure that there are few countries in the Third World including India who can say that from the conventional sources they can become self-sufficient in power in the foreseeable future. This is my impression that you will not be able to really make up for deficits as you go along and, therefore, you will have to think of some source which is absolutely inexhaustible and we cannot think of anything better than the Sun. So, this is an area which has to get a shot in the arm in the Eighth Five Year Plan and hereafter. I wish to free this area, this part of power, energy from the position of a sort of subordinate area to the position where it has its own importance and what else needs to be done, I would like to hit at the earliest opportunity.

Meanwhile, I have been talking with these companies, research institutions. I find that we are not very far from breaking even. I am told on high authority that the only impediment in developing this source was its comparative cost. Now, the most hopeful feature seems to be—this has been brought to my notice again recently, just about a week ago or ten days ago, that we are almost at the point of making a breakthrough but this will happen only when manufacture is undertaken at a massive level. It cannot be done with ten, fifteen or twenty units and so on and the capacity in the country itself is so limited which means that investors are not investing their money on this. So, it is an all round diffidence that is causing some impediment in this programme. So, we will have to create all round confidence.

I am told that the Kirloskars are going in for manufacturing these pumps. Now these pump sets, the numbers that they are manufacturing are also very small when compared to the need of the people. Now, this is a matter not only of power, this is a matter of social justice. If I go to a tribal area, where every village is ten miles from every other village and every village has only about ten or twenty or thirty huts, am I not under obligation to give them drinking water? Do I say that you are only a few here, therefore I won't give you drinking water or you cannot have water?

In the same way, I cannot say that they will not get power and if the village happens to be ten miles from the nearest pole, nearest point from where it could be tapped, the electricity board will say and very rightly that this is not going to be economic and this is going to lead to losses. So ultimately the man there suffers, the school there suffers. In the first place no teacher goes there. Even if a teacher is made to go, what will he teach, what will he do without teaching aids? Whereas in other schools you have all equipments working with electricity and this school is deprived of these facilities because there is no power, I am sure we will be guilty. No one will forgive us for this social injustice that we are perpetrating on those people for no other reason except that they are born in a distant place. We have no right to do that.

So, the development of non-conventional sources of energy is not only a matter of social justice from my point of view and from any point of view. The Chief Minister of Rajasthan told me when I went there on the first of January that in about seventeen or twenty villages in that area, we have these sets, these non-conventional energy sets, working. He says that the people there are happier than those who are having electricity in their villages because those sets are working without any let or hinderance. There are no failures, there are no breakdowns, there are no running costs. Now, that is the kind of thing we need in a poor country like India. Far flung areas we have which you cannot reach, which you cannot hope to reach—in Madhya Pradesh, in Gujarat, in Andhra Pradesh. And in so many areas, particularly the whole tribal belt, mountains come in the way. There are lots of difficulties to make India completely electrified, every village in India electrified. It may be possible in some districts, it may be possible in Punjab and Haryana. There are not too many impediments there and then they have of course concentrated over the years, over the decades on that programme, therefore they have been able to achieve it. But to achieve it in Orissa, to achieve it in Bihar, to achieve it in Andhra Pradesh—that part of which borders on Madhya Pradesh it is going to be very difficult. Therefore, we will have to develop

this other non-conventional source and I am going to concentrate on that. The Government is going to concentrate on that from wherever technological and other assistance is available we are going to get it. This I have made clear in my presentations abroad and I am glad to say that some companies, some institutions doing research are coming forward. We can have joint research. I told them you can come, have joint research programmes in India, you will not have to wait for the sun to come out, it is available on all days more or less and therefore you will have not idle days at all, you will not have any mandays being lost on that programme. So, this I have made very clear and they are wanting to come. I hope in the next months, we will be able to embark on this programme in a big way. These are some of the things which I wanted to tell you.

In the coastal areas wind can be made use of. Some experiments have been done. They are quite successful; but the point is that in a large country like India you cannot go on with pilot projects. How many pilot projects, how many years you will be tinkering with the programme by having pilot projects alone. You will have to come, take courage in both hands, find the money find the people, find the will to start the programme in some area.

I am prepared now to give over an area consisting of say hundred villages, two hundred villages to anyone who wants to develop them with non-conventional sources.

Let it be on wells, let it be in villages, let it be in schools, wherever this has to be equipped let the equipment come, let them find out what is the optimum for a well which is to be worked by a 5 horsepower pump for eight hours. Now, this is the specification. On this specification let them work out of the models. Let them come out with their offers. We are there to examine them. Our engineers will examine them. In fact, our farmers will examine them. They are the best engineers in this respect because they are ultimate users. We will put everybody together.

I have offered a few villages in Haryana right on the border of Delhi where all these companies can come and exhibit their pumps. They have different kind of pumps. They say, "You please put these pumps in these villages so that people can come and see. We will pay for them."

So, I think we are following up on this programme and I would like to request the Chief Ministers to take similar interests. If the Chief Minister takes such interest in his State I am sure the programme will get a lot of encouragement and it will go on.

Bio-mass, bio-gas, all these things have been there for a long time. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission has been doing

this programme. Now we will have to review the programme and see if any improvement is needed, any further investment is needed in the Eighth Five Year Plan. We will do that.

All these other sources of energy will have to be explored and to the extent they are able to supplement the main power generation, howsoever small or in howsoever small an area of the country, that will be a good beginning but in course of time this will have to be expanded. We cannot be resting content on only pilot projects. So, this is one idea which I wanted to place before you for your consideration.

For the rest, the main impediment of the clearance on the environmental side as I said we will sort this out in a few months and you can go ahead with the programmes which will be eventually cleared.

About Hydel Projects, I really don't know. I have been told that much of the hydel potential is not being put to use. I have also been told that the projects are very costly. Now, we will have to have a sort of a compromise between the two and I have been told that one project in Himachal Pradesh which was earlier cleared by the World Bank, now our representative in the World Bank told us that that is not getting cleared and there are some difficulties in that. These are all specific matters which they have brought to my notice from time to time. I have told them to look into these things and I hope it will be possible for us to take decisions early.

About gas, the availability of gas in this country has been assessed differently at different times and when the next assessment comes, the assessment made on the earlier occasion goes down. Now they say X is available. After six months they say X minus is available and still after six months they say X minus and minus is available. So, how do you plan any projects on the basis of this diminishing assessment of the available gas? This has been our problem but then on other side even the ONGC cannot be faulted because what is contained under the earth, in the bowels of the earth, it is just not possible to assess accurately. Now, this is a dilemma. You cannot fault them because they according to whatever data they have from time to time, they have to make the assessment and assessments go on changing and on the basis of assessment made when you commit gas to a particular project, on the basis of that commitment the project authorities go on completing everything trying up everything, foreign investment, money and everything. Now, suddenly you say gas is not available or available not to that extent then the whole thing is upset. Frankly, I do not have a rough and ready answer for that except to say that our prospecting would have to be intensified, we will have to think of new areas and

more than anything else we will have to think twice before making firm commitments because based on these firm commitments decisions are taken and if the firm commitments happen to be defective or not made after taking into account all the factors then the whole nation may stand to suffer. I have not been able to find an answer to this. To the specific projects brought by the Chief Minister of Gujarat, we did find some solution. I hope it will go through, but that is not the whole solution. We will have to go into it once again. I will call the Chief Ministers concerned through whose States the pipelines are coming and also in whose States gas deposits have been found.

In this respect I would like to specially mention the North-Eastern States. I am told that the North-Eastern States are sitting on gas because Bangladesh is sitting on gas. I know that. How much, we do not know. But I am not quite sure whether the necessary prospecting or necessary assessment of the availability of gas has been made in that area. I would like first priority to be given to that area. Again the distances coming in the way of the progress of that area are well known.

I entirely agree that the North-East has to be looked into as a special case for development. They have started the plans late, they have been late in starting their five years plans. I shall see who is to be made responsible for the assessment and prospecting of the gas deposits there. We will take early action on this matter.

About the Regional Power Tariff Boards as decided in the Power Ministers' Conference held in September 1991, I am told that this is being looked into and a Cabinet note is on its way. I promise you that once it comes to the Cabinet it won't take too long. At least Cabinet has not been allowed to take too long in taking decision, not too many have been shelved for the next meetings. We have been taking regular decisions and quick decisions.

Thank you very much once again for having come. We will have occasion to call the Chief Ministers in respect of particular problems pertaining to their states and particular responses that we need from them in respect of projects and generally in the field of power.

Quality Awareness for Better Life

I AM INDEED happy to be associated with this campaign. I wish your campaign all success. Wherever you go, whatever the number of cities you visit, whatever the number of factories you wish to motivate, it is good that we are making people conscious of quality. The quality part has not been to a considerable extent taken care of during the last forty years of independence. When we had nothing perhaps we wanted something. When we had something, it is natural to ask for more. More of the same if you like. But if you have whatever you think you should have to some extent in quantity a quest for quality, equally naturally, becomes irresistible.

So, it is back from the time when a matriculate non-trained teacher was supposed to be teaching a matriculation class himself. That is where we started education. We don't have teachers. From that time to time when we want every teacher to be rigorously tested for his own quality, plus the most important quality of a teacher being the capacity to impart his own skills to his pupils. He may be very accomplished. I have seen many teachers, great scholars themselves but they just could not communicate those skills to the pupils. From that time to the present time it is a broad jump, it is a big jump. We are happy about it.

I want to bless this campaign. I want all of you to be involved in this as many as possible and here comes the time when someone has to tell you something which no one has told you so far. We are all for quality, we are all for the campaign but the campaign for quality, the campaign for anything also is a campaign against something. Both are interlinked.

The campaign for quality, for example, is a campaign against inefficiency. It is a campaign against wastage, a campaign against callousness, a campaign against a disorganised way of doing things. So there is that element of campaigning against something and that is where many campaigns fall. You have right under your nose something happening. You cannot change it. You want to change it very much. But things happen in a way that you cannot change and that is where your willpower comes, your fighting qualities come, your persistence comes, your doggedness comes.

Where you think that there is no consciousness you have to create it, where there is no awareness you have to create it.

People do know what is better between two things if they have a choice. Many times they don't have the choice. They have to do things, they have to buy things, they have to take things on a take it or leave it basis. You know it. What is a choice in a village? What is a choice for the poor who can afford only things 'A' not things 'B'. Either he has to wait or he has to have something. So, the choices are so difficult to make in life that it is not possible always to say that you are in a position to do what you think is better, to buy what you think is of better quality. You are pushed into situations where you have to think of the next best. That is life, you just cannot wish it away.

Nevertheless, the choice for a nation to become better, to improve is always open. That choice is never closed and it is an endless process. You are better today than what you were yesterday and so on. Within five years, within ten years, quality of whatever is produced in India including the human material will improve to a point where we can say that the made in India label will be as effective as the label of any other country. The beginning of course has to be with the human material. We have not been able to do that to the extent necessary. Our schools, our colleges and universities need to be improved to a very large extent. The method of testing needs to be improved to the greatest extent possible.

If you ask me one single area where a total revolution is needed, it is the area of testing. We had started what is called a 'national testing service.' I don't know whether it is prospering or doddering. We had all these things in the making of the new education policy. So, it is the test, the test of the quality, that is important. Along with the test will come the necessity to come up to the test. These two are inseparable. With the one comes the other. So the urge to improve and the urge to get the best out of everything, has to be dovetailed into all activity of the nation, starting with education, starting with health-care and it should go on to all departments of life.

I feel happy about the campaign. With very keen interest I would like to know, if there is any way of measuring the success of your campaign if it could be measurable not just by the number of visits or speeches but by actual results. I would be very happy. But then you have to make a beginning somewhere. It is here. May be after a year you will be able to say that something has improved and you will be able to show instances of improvement. I will be happier in that case. I wish you all success in your campaign in making an effort to make the country the best among the world.

Involving the People in Development Process

I HAVE GREAT pleasure in welcoming you all to the forty-fourth meeting of the National Development Council. The Council met a few months ago, in December 1991, and gave its approval to the Directional Paper on the Eighth Plan. This set in motion the process of detailed formulation of the Plan. I am happy to say that we are now at the final stage of this process. The Eighth Five Year Plan has been prepared on the basis of extensive discussions which the Planning Commission has had with Central Ministries, State Governments and Union Territory Administrations. The Plan is now before this august body for its consideration.

Momentous changes are taking place around us in the economic, social and political spheres. A philosophy of growth guided by market forces and liberal policies is emerging. In this context, the role and even the relevance of planning is being questioned. But, the emerging global economic and political changes do not mean a reduction of responsibility on the part of Government and the Planning Commission; rather these changes only serve to reinforce their roles. In my address to the last NDC I had emphasised that planning had a critical role in the social, human and economic development of our people. It has a particularly crucial role in the creation of social infrastructure and in the sphere of human development.

Our past experience with the Public Sector and the experience of several countries of the world has shown that under some conditions the market can serve as a device for promoting efficiency. We must all recognise this role of the market. But the growth and development of this country cannot be left entirely to the market mechanism. We cannot rely on the market to fulfill the minimum needs of our people. We cannot provide education and health for all through the market. The market alone cannot ensure employment and a living wage to all our rural poor. These limitations of the market as the sole vehicle of development have to be recognised and the limitations are all known to us. Therefore, we have to supplement these limitations by some other way and that other way would only be the way of the state intervention.

Planning will, therefore, continue to have a crucial role to play in a number of areas, particularly in macro-economic management, in the creation of social infrastructure and in the sphere of human development, including taking care of the poor. The market mechanism may be able to bring about an “equilibrium” between “demand”—packed by purchasing power—and “supply” in this sphere too, but it will not be able to bring about a balance between “need” and “supply”. Planning is necessary to take care of the poor and the downtrodden, who are for most part, outside the market system and have little asset endowment to benefit from the natural growth of the economic activity. Development of backward, hill and remote areas and their integration with the mainstream of economic activities in the country also cannot be completely left to the market, and will, therefore, have to be undertaken as a planned effort. Markets cannot play the required role in the areas like protection of the environment, forests and ecology; and in guiding the use of scarce resources like rare minerals, land and water. A long term perspective, and hence planning, is called, for in these areas. Strengthening of physical infrastructure like energy, transport, communications and irrigation which support the growth process on a sustainable basis is another area where the role of planning is crucial. The expected increasing participation of the private sector in investments in these sectors does not in any way detract from the criticality or the need for planning. In the emerging context, therefore, planning and the market mechanism should be so dovetailed as to be complementary to each other.

Planning for public investment has to be detailed, somewhat like corporate planning. For the rest of the system, it has to be indicative, outlining the broad directions in which the economy should be moving. It will provide a vision of the future along with medium term projections for the entire economy, appropriate information systems, an indication of areas of strengths and weaknesses and appropriate policies to meet the desired goals. It will also seek to ensure a degree of consensus in the system through a meaningful dialogue between “social partners” in development, namely government, farmers, trade unions, business, etc.

To my mind the question is not of a choice between the market mechanism on the one hand and planning on the other on an either-or basis. The crucial question is how to strengthen a decentralised structure from the grass root-level upwards and how to truly involve the people in the development process. The real challenge for the Government, both at the Centre and the States, is to play an integrative role in developing a holistic approach to policy formulation, especially in critical and inter-sectoral areas of human

and economic development. The State Governments and the Panchayati Raj Institutions have to address this question in a thoroughgoing manner.

Let me illustrate what I have in mind, with reference to two critical areas: literacy and family welfare. Adult education programmes had till recently been viewed only as government's responsibility. It is only the recent successes of the area-specific and time-bound mass campaigns for total literacy launched first in Kerala, and now even in the more backward regions of the country, that has given confidence and hope for eradication of illiteracy during the Eighth Plan. These campaigns enlist the active support of all members of society, volunteers, activists, students, teachers, NGOs (non-governmental organisation) and the local community. Similarly, the Eighth Plan strategy for family welfare and population control squarely places the major role in the planning, implementation and administration of the programme on Panchayat level institutions and places very great reliance on the involvement of the people.

In this connection, I would like to make a special reference to the need to involve Members of Parliament in the development programmes in their constituencies. I have been receiving persistent complaints in this regard. Considering the responsibility we owe to Parliament and also in view of the fact that as representatives of the people, the Members of Parliament are entitled to take interest in their constituencies, a uniform pattern of their involvement in the various development processes in the country is essential. I request the Chief Ministers to kindly take note of this because the persistency with which Members of Parliament have been complaining leaves me no option but to make this appeal at this juncture.

It is in this manner that the Eighth Five Year Plan seeks to meet the challenges confronting the nation at the present juncture. There is a heavy backlog in the provision of social and consumption needs of the people; poverty and deprivation levels, though reduced, are still unacceptably high. Illiteracy, especially among women, continues to be abysmal. The high incidence of infant mortality and the acute unemployment situation are matters of anxiety. The increasing fiscal and budgetary deficits, the critical balance of payments situation, inflation, as well as the urgent need to restructure the economy to make it vibrant and internationally competitive, also require our immediate attention.

The Eighth Plan, therefore, accords priority to generation of adequate employment to achieve near full employment by the turn of the century. Towards this end wage employment programmes

will be a major thrust area. The other priority areas will be the control of population growth, universalisation of elementary education and eradication of illiteracy, provision of safe drinking water and primary health facilities for the entire population, growth and diversification of agriculture to achieve self-sufficiency in food grains and generate surpluses for exports and strengthening of infrastructure to support the growth process on a sustainable basis.

The Deputy Chairman has just made a reference to wage employment in the villages. Naturally this would be our first priority so far as the rural areas are concerned. But I would like to point out at this point that this is going to be only a temporary measure. With universalisation of primary education, with more and more high schools coming in the rural areas, wage employment cannot be continued beyond a point. A time will come when the young people will say they are not for wages, and that they need a different kind of employment. I am not talking of the wage earning generation of today. This generation will continue to earn their wages and we will have to cater to them. But please remember that while this generation phases out, the next generation will not just be content with earning wages as their fathers have been, as their mothers have been. They will ask for a different kind of employment. For that you have to be ready which means that the kind of development which we are envisaging, like roads and tanks and such things, these will have to change and a more sophisticated form of development—which is probably not yet ready but which will have to be studied and formulated—will have to be introduced, may be in the next five years. I don't think we can wait much longer than that. So, this is one point which strikes me as important because if we are not conscious of this and if we are not dealing with this right now, the very programme of universalisation of primary education, elementary education, the very programme of having more and more secondary schools, etc. opened in the rural areas will create a stalemate where we will not be able to cater to their needs. So, we have to be thinking of that from now on.

I think the Ninth Plan would have to take care of what I have just stated. The Eighth Plan is safe so far as wage earning is concerned—that generation will continue. But in order to cater to the age group of, let us say 15 to 20, and prevent them from going into the towns, prevent largescale urbanisation that is taking place today, we have to think in the Ninth Plan of something which keeps these semi-educated or educated boys and girls within the village by providing the employment which really befits them, which they consider it worth their while and not below their dignity.

This is a social as well as an economic problem which has to be gone into in greater detail.

The Plan envisages an average annual rate of growth of 5.6 per cent in GDP—the rate of growth approved by the Council in December last. It involves a total investment of Rs.7,98,000 crores. Most of this is to be financed from domestic resources. Public sector investment is placed at Rs. 3,61,000 crores and outlay at Rs.4,34,100 crores. The size of the States' Plan is projected to be Rs. 1,79,985 crores. The declining trend in the share of the States in the Public Sector Plan is sought to be reversed in the Eighth Plan : the share is expected to be 41 per cent against the realised level of 39 per cent in the Seventh Plan.

The Plan proposes a significant shift in investment in favour of agriculture and allied sectors. Investment in agriculture had been declining over the years, although agricultural growth is crucial for maintaining food security and for generating employment. The relative share of the infrastructure sector is proposed to be maintained to strengthen the foundations of growth in the future.

The private sector will be given a larger share than before in a number of economic activities—electricity, communications; oil and coal, petro-chemicals, heavy capital goods industries and organised commercial services, to name a few. I expect the private sector to rise to the occasion and contribute substantially to the development of these sectors of the economy.

The realisation of the projected level of investment and, therefore, of the objectives set for the Plan, call for a well conceived set of macro-economic policies and the utmost financial discipline on the part of all concerned—the Central and State Governments, public and private enterprises and the financial institutions. The plan is a programme for the development of the nation and it is our joint responsibility to successfully implement it.

Before I conclude, I would specifically like to draw the attention of the Council to certain issues. The Central Government has already taken a number of steps like reduction in the size of the Government machinery and reducing Government expenditure with a view to reversing the sharply deteriorating trend in Government savings. The restructuring of the Central Public Sector enterprises is also under active consideration so that they may contribute to internal resource generation needs of the Public Sector Plan. I would request the Chief Minister to initiate similar action in the States, if it has not already been done. The tendency in smaller States, and even smaller districts in bigger States, to develop administrative structures similar to larger ones needs to be checked. In general, State Public Sector enterprises currently make a negative

contribution to the Government kitty. It is necessary to make them contribute substantially to the resource needs of the Plan by imparting operational efficiency to them and by appropriate pricing of the utilities so as to make them viable. In other areas like the Public Distribution System, we should go in for sharper targeting of beneficiaries to ensure avoidance of leakages and to channel scarce resources to those sections of the people who need and deserve the benefits most.

The policy changes initiated recently on the economic, trade and financial fronts represent a good beginning. These need to be carried further and the pace of reforms sustained to reap their full benefits, to ensure successful implementation of the Eighth Plan. The reforms have to be accompanied by fiscal and monetary policies aimed at maintaining a reasonable price stability and a sustainable balance of payments. The last two budgets of the Central Government were steps in this direction. I request the Chief Ministers to take similar steps in their States in regard to fiscal discipline and price stability.

I am sure that the Central and State Governments, the private sector and all sections of society would contribute fully to the successful implementation of the Plan. Expenditure alone does not help in achieving targets. What would help is a reorientation in our approach to handling the problems, and a reorientation in the way of our implementing the programmes through a much higher degree of involvement of the people.

I want to add one or two comments based on my personal experience at the grass roots level. I have found that some kind of avoidable discrimination is being resorted to at the grass root levels where some political overtones are being felt in the process of development. I would very earnestly request you that this should be avoided.

Development is development and it should be seen as development. When resources are made available they are not a bounty, they are resources meant for the people. If the spirit is one of discrimination on political or other lines, then the entire point is lost, funds are lost and we don't get any results.

I have just said this by way of a hint but we know examples which could be given. I would be having some occasion to talk to the Chief Ministers about this. I feel it very strongly and it is necessary that this is impressed at the beginning of the Eighth Plan rather than after the damage is done and we are halfway through. So, this is the time to draw your attention to this point and hence I am doing that.

I commend the Eighth Five Year Plan for the consideration of the Council.

225 years of Survey of India

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to be among the scientists in the field of surveying and mapping. We are commemorating the completion of 225 years in the Survey of India's dedicated services to the nation.

Survey of India is not only one of the oldest Government departments in this country, but also one of the oldest institutions of its kind in the world. It, therefore, gives me great pleasure to be here on this occasion.

Two centuries and a quarter is a long span of time with its inexorable imprints on the various facets in this unique organisation. Along side the history of Survey of India flows the history of development of modern science, the post Industrial Revolution period. I am glad to learn that the Survey of India has survived these vicissitudes and today it is a multi-disciplinary organisation drawing experts from diverse fields such as mathematics, physics, civil engineering, instrumentation, photography, remote sensing, seismicity, printing and computer science. The accuracy with which scientific measurements have to be made renders the work of this organisation very exacting and arduous. I am happy that Survey of India has lived up to the demands of the profession and established a sustained reputation for reliability.

From the time of Michael Topping, who in 1787 set up a series of ground reference points from Madras to Palk Strait by triangular surveys, to the singular achievements of Col. Sir George Everest, during whose tenure as Surveyor General between 1830 to 1843, the height of the Mount Everest, named after him, was computed, and beyond, several innovations extended the accuracy of surveying. One related to the use of spirit levelling techniques in measuring heights accurately. A second technique innovation related to the conducting measurements of the Earth's gravity field to account for the deflection of plumb line. Such successes activated a spirit of scientific adventure in the Survey of India, and I am sure this spirit continues to pervade the organisation even today.

With the coming in of aeroplanes and the advances in the art of photography, surveying methods have got revolutionised. Aerial photography has started eliminating ground surveys, though ground survey will still be necessary for some time to validate what has

Speech on the occasion of the commemoration of the completion of 225 years of the Survey of India, New Delhi, 30 June 1992

been interpreted from the photographs. In this context, it is unfortunate that cadastral surveys being conducted by the Revenue Departments in the States have not kept pace with technological development. Cadastral surveys today use the same old technology that existed at the beginning of this century.

Since independence, Survey of India has been mandated to place an active role in the mainstream of development of the country. Today there is hardly any major project without the stamp of the Survey of India. A large number of surveys on varying scales have been undertaken for the country's development during the several five year plans. These surveys cover multifarious sectors, such as irrigation, hydel power, mining, steel and the railways. There is also a spurt in interrelated scientific activities. Glaciological studies in the Himalayas, mapping of Antarctica, movement of dams, seismic activities and studies of tectonic strains are notable examples of such interrelated pursuits cutting across a wide variety of activities.

For the future the Survey of India has a lot to do obviously. Because the more you achieve, the more remains to be achieved. This is the modern trend. Certain directions are clear but in view of the fast changing economic, trade and technological scenario within and outside the country, and attempts towards globalisation, this organisation must discuss and redefine its priorities. Over a long period of more than two centuries, this organisation has gathered a storehouse of knowledge and experience. Today it must not limit itself to go on gathering knowledge and applying it only towards its own circumscribed objectives. Survey of India must now transfer its knowledge and expertise to others, in India and abroad.

There are a number of areas in which such an attempt can be made. One is the area of cadastral surveys of which I have just made a reference. A gigantic effort is needed to complete such work. And this is beyond the capability of any single organisation. Knowledge of various specialised techniques needed in surveying work must be transferred to other organisations, private or public, each specialising in one or a group of special techniques. The second area of knowledge transfer can be the development of a geographic information system. A geographic information system is a must for any industry or an organisation interested seriously in general planning and in environmental management. Its importance is increasing in a variety of uses, as for example, in utility mapping in cities, automatic car navigation, street maps etc. This is a field where opportunity is so vast that possibly no area of societal development will be left untouched. Today in our

country, Survey of India is the only organisation having the requisite expertise in this field. This expertise must be disseminated to non-governmental agencies also, so that we can reap the benefits of a developing market.

I would like to point to another area where Survey of India requires to focus its attention. This is in the international market, where it can look for projects abroad either alone or in collaboration with similar institutions in the world. It can explore for projects in digital mapping, geographic information service development or even in areas of general surveying or consultancy. An imaginative and creative approach is necessary. It is this kind of new thinking that I would like to see activated in the organisation.

As you all know, as the needs of the developing countries increase, as their development goes forward, there will be a lot of need for survey of all kinds. It is not just the systematic kind of survey that has developed during the last 200 years. But you will have to jump many, many decades and go ahead there for something like a lateral entry into what is latest. This is going to create a lot of demand for expertise and experts from countries like India. In whatever field I see, wherever I go, I find that whatever experience we have had during the last more than a hundred years, in some areas two hundred years—as per example this particular area all this—is going to be needed not necessarily to make money out of it but even more importantly to show how India can help others. This is our strong point. In the international field, India's strong point has always been the help it can render to countries which are even more backward than us and need our help. And as I am speaking to you, I am able to realise, I am able to visualise a stage at a time where perhaps Survey of India and its experts will be in very great need. I would like you to consider this aspect. May be people engaged in dealing with other countries have to be told about the capabilities of this country and anything done for smaller and more underdeveloped countries by India would be gratefully acknowledged for all time to come. It will bring dividends politically in our relations with other countries.

Maps have a great value. At the same time, maps hold a great danger. If we have been victims of cartographic aggression, much of the trouble we have on the borders is the result of half-baked maps or half-baked techniques in map making. If only the perfect methods of today had been available to people like Mac Mohan and so on, we would not be facing the situations on the border today. So it is not just a question of perfecting the techniques. It has much more to it. And therefore, in the world of tomorrow, where you can clearly see lot of trouble growing between countries,

between borders, between rivers—all kinds of disputes, potential disputes everywhere in the world—a correct map or a most sophisticated and accurate method of mapping would be of great value. It would be a great tool, a very important and useful tool in the maintenance of international peace. Looks farfetched but it is true. Look at those countries in which we have these problems. Where does one region end, where does the other region begin. They take language as a base, they fail. Because there is an area where people talk two three languages and you do not know where to draw the line. They take some other factors like some spots which can remain unaltered they call the natural boundries and so on again they fail. Take rivers, they fail. They change their course. Between India and Bangladesh, the changing of courses of some rivers has caused problems—problems of immigration, problems of people coming and claiming citizenship—all kinds of problems. So, I think the expertise, the modernisation process that the Survey of India has undertaken is the best that has happend to this country in this particular field. I welcome these efforts and I would like to see the efforts encourage as we go along. We see our Minister for Environment proudly telling a conference that the forest cover in India has increased by one and a half per cent or two per cent or whatever, I look at him a little doubtfully but he has the absolute cocksureness with which he says this has happened. It gives you the courage to say something because you are sure you are on firm ground and that is what Kamal Nath showed himself to be. For the first time we have come to know that the forest cover in India has actually registered an increase. It is a great morale boost. So, these methods have to be perfected as we go along and I would say that any encouragement given to this activity is well utilised and this should be done.

I would like to thank you very much for inviting me here, giving me an idea of what has been done during the last 225 years. I wish you well. I give you all my blessings, good wishes for a bright and useful future, useful not only for the country but useful for the whole world.

II

Economic Scene

Restructuring the Economy

WHEN I SPOKE to you last, I promised quick and bold measures to restore our sick economy to health.

We have taken the first step to fulfil that promise.

This is just the beginning. A further set of far-reaching changes and reforms is on the way.

For the last 18 months there had been paralysis on the economic front. The last two governments postponed taking vital decisions. The fiscal position was allowed to deteriorate. The balance of payments crisis became unmanageable. Non-resident Indians and foreign lenders became more and more reluctant to lend money to India.

Consequently, India's external reserves declined steeply and we had no foreign exchange to import even such essential commodities as diesel, kerosene, edible oil and fertiliser. The net result was that when we came to power we found the financial position of the country in a terrible mess.

Desperate maladies call for drastic remedies. And that is what we have done. And that is what we will continue to do.

The Reserve Bank changed the exchange rate of the rupee. This was done so that we can export more. More garments, more leather products, more gems and jewellery, more agricultural products made in India will now be sold abroad. This will not only earn us foreign exchange but also create new employment at home.

And why do we need to earn foreign exchange so badly? Not to import luxury items but to buy commodities like kerosene and diesel, fertilisers, edible oil and steel. We produce these commodities, but what we produce is not enough. We are stepping up our production, but for some time we have to import.

The adjustment in the exchange rate will discourage the import of non-essential goods and will therefore save foreign exchange for import of essential goods of mass consumption. It will also end uncertainty about the future of our currency and will encourage non-resident Indians to send more money to be deposited in their accounts in India.

After changing the value of the rupee we undertook a major overhaul of the trade policy. Our message was simple—you cannot import if you do not export. We cut down on export licenses so

that our exporters do not face hurdles. We eliminated subsidies so that the money saved could be better deployed in welfare and employment programmes.

My objective is to make India truly self-reliant. Self-reliance is not a mere slogan for me. It means the ability to pay for our imports through exports. My motto is—trade, not aid. Aid is a crutch. Trade builds pride. And India has been trading for thousands of years.

Friends, Rajiv Gandhi came to power in 1984. He first understood the need for India to change her traditional way of thinking and doing things. He realised that if India is to survive and prosper, fundamental economic reforms must be carried out. He did that. What we have done is a continuation of the policies initiated by him.

In my first address to you I had outlined the agenda of my government. We stand committed to that agenda. The Budget which will be presented on July 24 will clearly articulate the social and economic philosophy of my government, the broad outlines of which are evident in our actions.

What is this outline?

We believe that a bulk of government regulations and controls on economic activity have outlived their utility. They are stifling the creativity and innovativeness of our people. Excessive controls have also bred corruption. Indeed, they have come in the way of achieving our objectives of expanding employment opportunities, reducing rural-urban disparities and ensuring greater social justice.

We believe that the Nation, as well as the Government, must learn to live within its means. Normally a family borrows money to buy an asset and not to meet daily expenditure. So it is with the Government. There is much fat in Government expenditure. This can and will be cut.

We believe that Government concessions must be for the poor and the really needy. Over the past few years, expenditure on this has increased substantially and in many instances the concessions are being enjoyed by people who are not in dire need of them. This must change.

We believe that India has much to learn from what is happening elsewhere in the world. Many countries are bringing in far-reaching changes. We find major economic transformation sweeping large countries like the Soviet Union and China, as well as small countries in Eastern Europe. There is a change in outlook, a change in mind-set everywhere. India too cannot lag behind if she has to survive, as she must, in the new environment.

Our commitment to work for the uplift of the poor, the underprivileged and the disadvantaged is firm and irrevocable. We believe that this is best achieved if Government concentrates on providing drinking water, on expanding education, on fighting social discrimination, on creating jobs, on establishing infrastructure. Our measures will reflect this ideology.

I wish to assure you that while we are restructuring the economy to make it more productive and efficient, prices will be kept under the strictest control. We will ensure adequate availability and supply of essential commodities.

Friends, it will be dishonest for me to pretend that the job of repairing our economy will be easy, quick or smooth. Each one of us will be called upon to make sacrifices. This is no time for partisan politics. I need the co-operation of each and every one of you. I need your support, your understanding. Together, we will succeed.

The New Industrial Policy

IT HAS BEEN much too long and much too repetitive too. But then honourable Members are as much entitled to repeat one another as to bring up fresh points. So, my gratitude to all of them.

I shall not refer to each Member but I shall only confine my reply to certain points made on certain salient subjects which figure in the industrial policy and that, I think, should be enough to cover the entire debate.

For the rest, Members have also referred to certain specific industries, specific problems of industries, in their own areas. It is a legitimate point made by each one of them or many of them.

What I would propose is that we will go through the debate, go through the speeches and each individual Member will be sent note or a reply in regard to the specific points raised by him so that no Member need be under the impression that his own area or the specific difficulty pointed out by him, has been ignored at Government level. That is not the intention.

The first criticism, the first comment about the new policy, has been that either it has been dictated from outside by someone or it has deviated from the industrial policies of the past.

Now I would like to very respectfully submit that neither of these charges is true. The industrial policy directly emanates from the Congress manifesto which promised to the people exactly what the industrial policy has come to contain. The Party promised to tackle the problem through vigorous export promotion, effective import substitution and increasing productivity and efficiency in the economy, among other things. In the industrial sector particularly it promised to pursue a sound policy framework which would lead to encouragement of entrepreneurship, simplification of the regulatory system, bringing in new technology and increasing competitiveness for the benefit of the common man.

Now, Sir, even this manifesto is not a sudden creation or a sudden development. It has emanated as a logical result from the long experience of forty years. The policy statements have come from time to time, from decade to decade, perhaps more than once in the same decade. Therefore, there is a continuity, there is a logical sequence to all the statements and it is not correct to say, I submit, that there is something abruptly brought into this policy which was not there earlier. This is only an elaboration. This has also derived from the experience of the past that in some areas if we have been hesitant, or, if we have gone only half-way and we have not found the dividends that we expected, then it is necessary to go in the same direction a little faster and may pull out a few more obstacles, dismantle a few more difficulties which were coming in the way. So, it is in general, an extension of the previous policies and nothing very new. So, to say that someone, from outside has been dictating this policy would be very wrong.

The other charge is that Panditji's line, Pandit Nehru's industrial policy has been given up. This again, I have explained several times before and briefly, I would say again, is not correct. This charge is far from true.

I would refer to the Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956 which laid down the foundation for a strong and diversified industrial base in the country and which continues to guide us in our industrial policies and procedures. It is a remarkable tribute to the vision of Pandit Nehru that the objectives laid down in that Resolution are as true and relevant today as they were in 1956. The basic objective in that policy was to speed up industrialisation in the country. Towards that end, it provided for industries of basic and strategic importance in the Indian Public Sector. Now, this is the most crucial

thing. What was strategic at that time was included in the Public Sector. It was also clear that there were some sectors in which apart from the Government no one was prepared to do the investment of that order. It is very clear. We went round the world. How did the Bhilai Steel Plant come? We wanted to build a Steel Plant with assistance from other countries. They said: "Why do you need a Steel Plant? You don't need a Steel Plant." Here, we are. We will supply you steel. But, we wanted to be self-reliant, we wanted a Steel Plant. We wanted these key industries, these basic industries and at that time no one other than the Soviet Union was prepared to oblige us. That was the reason we had to go in for the Steel Plant because we could see that in their denials there was a design. It was not just a case of saying "No, we can't afford it. We cannot give you." But it was a case of saying: "We will not give it to you."

There was a design behind that denial. That is why we were determined to go in for it. Now, times have changed. Today again it is possible for the Public Sector to go into areas where the Private Sector will not go.

Where it is very necessary to go and make investments of a large magnitude, the public sector will go and the policy very clearly lays down that it will do so. Today we are talking about the expansion of the public sector. But where is the money going to come from? The public sector has got an investment, I am told, of about rupees one lakh crore already. It has not really given the return which it was expected to in order to plough back in the expansion of the public sector. Now it is just not possible for the State, for the government to find resources of that magnitude which could result in any appreciable expansion of the public sector. This is a stark reality today. So, we cannot say that the public sector is being jettisoned. We know that the public sector is important. We found that it was useful and useful from many points of view. We are happy about the public sector and its performance, in certain areas. But in the most crucial area of paying for its own expansion, we are not happy about its performance at all. Therefore, we had to find today other avenues because whatever you produce in the public sector today is not going to be sufficient. How much do you produce—36 or 37 per cent of the fertilizers in this country? The same is the case with steel: the same is the case with everything that is produced in the public sector. And unless you expand the public sector, for which there is no money, your needs will not be met. It is that simple. Therefore, either we have to import or we have to diversify and entrust it to sectors where it is possible to produce goods in

that magnitude. Therefore, it is more a pragmatic approach to the question. There is no theoretical approach. If it comes to efficiency, whether it is private or public, any inefficient industry will perish. It will not stand. Today we are in competition with the whole world. The engineering graduate of India is much better than a non-engineering graduate of India. But he has to compete with the engineers of other countries.

Industry in India has to compete with the industries in other countries. And if we think that we can live all alone in this country or can live in an isolated way, this, I think, is not correct, is not going to be possible. All other countries with centralised economies, are now relating to, and entering the world economy in a big way. We have already entered the world economy in a big way. We are already there as a part of the world economy. But we have to really gear ourselves in order to make a place for ourselves in the world economy. And this is the need of the hour. And that is why, we have to be competitive. That is why, we have to think of cost effectiveness. That is why we have to think of the latest technology.

Coming to technology, Nirmal Babu has told us something about appropriate technology. If you have a washing machine, how many people are you throwing out of employment? The only thing is, if you have a lakh of washing machines being made, to how many are you giving employment, on the other side?

A MEMBER : How many?

PRIME MINISTER : Let us calculate. And what kind of employment are you giving, what kind of employment are you diversifying?

A MEMBER : Those resources which are utilised for producing washing machines, could be utilised for other purposes. (Interruptions).

PRIME MINISTER : That is the point. If you take that as the criterion, then you will remain a country of maid-servants only. This is the point. You are condemning our women folk to life of drudgery permanently. That is where diversification is necessary. That is why, we have not given them any education so far.

Let her be educated. She will refuse to do the washing, the moment you educate her. Today, we are talking of a society, which itself is fast changing. And if you do not admit that this change is coming, you will be overtaken by events. This is what I would like to say. It is very simple to say that "you are throwing people out of employment". But what kind of employment?

The point raised by Nirmal Babu is totally different. We want to modernise : we want to be a modern society : we want to be a society in which every member has certain quality of life.

One example has come here. I am only trying to say something about a particular example. I am not talking of three per cent. I am not talking of thirty per cent. I am talking of an India, which wants to be equal to other nations. India does not want to be lagging behind for all time. India does not want to be backward for all time.

I would like to make it very clear that it will not be possible for anyone to keep Indian society backward for all time. Whatever the price to be paid, we will have to modernise, we will have to become competitive : we will have to rub shoulders with others. There is no other way. Let us be very clear about that.

A MEMBER : For the sake of modernisation, the handloom sector will be abolished immediately and only high tech units will remain!

PRIME MINISTER : The handloom sector has never been abolished. It will never be abolished. Going further have an eight spindle Ambar Charka which has come into the market now and it is going to be inaugurated in the next few days.(Interruptions). All these are going to coexist in this country and each one of them will be allowed to exist and flourish. This is the industrial policy. There is no question of allowing any of these to get extinct. There is going to be competition within each particular area. There is not going to be a competition between the big and small and the medium. That will not be allowed because that is the gist of the policy.

A MEMBER : I quite appreciate; he has said India will not remain backward. He has got his own perception of forwardness. I would like to know how much percentage of people of this country will have the benefit of the so called advance and the progress. What is his computation?

PRIME MINISTER : An increasing number; an ever increasing percentage of this country will get the benefit. Their incomes will increase. Their lives will improve and that is the aim of the industrial policy. It is not true to say that this industrial policy is going to benefit only a small class. Those days have gone and it is not possible. The whole country will have to be buzzing with industry starting from the village and going upwards to the metropolis. There is no question of locating anything only in the metropolis, only in the cities.

Let us understand. Let us admit old mistakes. Let us admit the distortions. Only then we will make any progress. It is not possible to close our eyes to what has happened; close our eyes to what should have happened, but not happened; let us not be dogmatic—that is not the way of progress. We will have to be pragmatic; we

will have to see where we have gone wrong and we will have to correct those things.

About the public sector I am clearly stating that there is very little scope for any expansion of the public sector in the areas in which it has been dominant so far. It will have to go into new areas, frontier areas of technology where high investment and also high technology will be needed. If that is not done then our country will again become backward and remain backward.

It is true that the private sector does not go in advance. Private sector only follows and I agree with Nirmal Babu that the public sector is important even for the private sector. This we have been saying, this Rajiv Gandhi said, this Indira Gandhi said; this has been one of the accepted principles of the public sector itself; one of the reasons for which the public sector existed and will exist. Therefore there is no question of winding up or dismantling the public sector. It will go into new areas; it will go into pioneering areas; it will remain the pioneer of the industry in this country.

About licencing policy I don't think there can be any objection to the removal of all the difficulties; the licencing procedure and so on and making industry and industrialisation easier than before. I don't think there can be any serious objection to this. This is because, again everyone has been complaining in Parliament, out of Parliament, everywhere about the kind of irritations that one has felt in starting an industry. Young men come, go from pillar to post, they go on bitterly complaining about all these things. Today if we are removing them, there is no need for anyone to complain. I would say that all the complaints will be a thing of the past. There will be some difficulties emanating from human nature. But atleast the man-made barriers that we have made for various reasons will go.

Only yesterday there was a proposal to more or less dismantle the DGS&D in one of its activities. We are looking into it. We take a few days to see whether anything still remains to be retained in that. So, this kind of examination is going on in all these matters. On some, orders have already issued. I would not be able to give you the full list; but we are very much conscious of the fact that a policy without a follow-up in respect of the bureaucratic rules, regulations, all the other follow-ups is really no policy and will not take us very far. That is being attended to; I would like to assure the House, on that score.

About multi-nationals, I really don't know why this fear of the multi-nationals is still haunting us. I would like to submit to the House that what we consider multi-nationals in the past as a big monster coming from outside is no longer a monster and we do

not consider it to be a monster today. The Indian industry by any standards is able to withstand competition from anywhere, from any quarter. It has proved its mettle. It has proved its competitiveness.

So far as some of the areas are concerned, I can give you examples where our industries are in a position to stand competition with other industries. You will never be able to stand competition unless you have your own R & D. For the first time you can get technology from outside. But India cannot continue to get technology year after year. As they upgrade, you will have to upgrade on your own lines. This is the innovation which is possible under the new policy. This was not possible earlier because we were importing technology all the time. In the earlier stages we were importing finished products. Later on we started importing technology only. Now, the time has come when you cannot import technology on a continued basis. You will have to have your own technology upgradation within the country.

A MEMBER : That is why you are inviting MNCs!

PRIME MINISTER : We are inviting MNCs for the sake of taking their technology, for the sake of employment, for the sake of better competitiveness. This has happened before. In Indian industry, wherever we have got technology from outside, we have developed. We have made all efforts to develop our own R&D. And this is not adequate. I know that that process has to be intensified still. We have to have a much higher investment in technology, in R&D. Only then, we will be competitive. But there is hardly any alternative to it. This is what I would like to say. You just cannot have competitiveness in your technology and your own R&D for nothing. It has to be done deliberately. It will have to be done everywhere. This is a continuous process.

So, let us understand that this is a new age. We are in a new era. We do not have the entire map of the future in front of us. We will have to be path-breakers. We will have to be path-makers and stone-breakers, if necessary. We will have to go into new paths. In every village in this country with better tools for the artisans, with better facilities for those who are producing—the producers, the traditional producers of India—they will have to come to be the partners in the new industrialisation. It is not only about the big industries, it is not only about what is coming from outside but what grows from within. This is the important thing. If we have the small and the tiny sector, we want ancillarisation. If we do not have ancillarisation, the small sector will not flourish. The time has gone when we were using only the things made in the village. We used the chappals made in the village. We used the

ropes made in the village. Today, the villager does not want to use that. Let us understand this. He goes to the Bata's shop. He goes for the nylon net. He goes for the nylon rope in the cities. So, everything is changing.

In this changing world, if you do not change the pattern of industrialisation at every level, I am afraid the village society is not going to flourish at all. So, industrialisation has to go right down to the villages. That is what I understand. As a villager, I understand that every village, new industries on the basis of better base, better technology have to come in.

A large industry will have to enlist the support of hundreds and thousands of people in order to exist. This is what is happening in large industries wherever we have them. It is not throwing people out of employment; it is getting people in.

Then, what about the services? It is not just the manufacturing sector. What about the services sector? If there is an industry, how many people get employment in services, in serving that industry? Now, this is an expanding activity, circle after circle each larger than the previous one. This is how it will expand. We do not have a ready-made map, as I said. But I can see that the result of this industrial policy is going to be good for the whole country.

We are welcoming foreign direct investment. Why are we doing so? We have found that investment in this country, number one, is not adequate. Number two, it is not accompanied by technology. We have seen that during the last few years, direct investment from outside—foreign investment—has been dwindling. I can give you figures. But that is hardly necessary. That is a fact that has been proved, whereas foreign investment in other countries has been increasing. It has been increasing in Korea and has been increasing in other developing countries like Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia. All these countries are having a galloping increase in foreign investment. The only thing I cannot understand is why it should be that in India, it should come down steeply and why we should be squeamish about inviting foreign investment. Nothing else is the reason except an inferiority complex. We seem to feel inferior to the others who are coming in or whom we are inviting. Sir, there is absolutely no need for such a complex. As I said, we have successfully competed with others and we will be able to compete in future also. And in any case, we have to formulate a policy not on the basis of inferiority complex but on the basis of certain national confidence. That is why, the policy has been formulated as it is and I would like the honourable Members to look into those aspects of the policy.

Sir, there have been some comments on the MRTP Companies also. Now, we had started the MRTP concept about 20 to 30 years back, maybe from 1964 until now. What is the result now? We have tried to implement it in the only manner it can be implemented.

There has been no other way of doing it. The only thing is that this has not worked. Any pre-entry restrictions will not work and they will only stifle industry. They will not give any fillip to industry, if there are restrictions before you enter the industry. So, it has been decided, after the experience of the last 25 to 28 years that no pre-entry restrictions are desirable. We do away with those restrictions while we are very particular about unfair practices, restrictive practices being indulged in by those who are in those industries. So, at that end, we have become more stringent and the policy has become more stringent. At the pre-entry stage, the policy has become liberal. This is a deliberate change in that policy and I am sure that it has been made after a full consideration of all the pros and cons. We expect that this policy will bring in greater freedom, greater and unfettered freedom to the growth of industry and that is what we want today. So, while we can have a difference of opinion on all these matters, I have not found any alternative. Yes, you have doubts on a particular line of action. Yet you have no alternative to suggest as to what is to be done in this. If this is not to be done what is to be done? That is what I have to ask him and I am sure, Sir, we have...

A MEMBER : We have given you an alternative.

PRIME MINISTER : We have seen all that. We have come to a stage, Mr. Speaker Sir, where this country cannot go ahead without alternatives. It cannot go on the negative aspect, of everything being bad and no alternative for anything which we are criticising. This is not possible now. We will have to take risks. We have to take a stand. We will have to go ahead according to our lights. If we falter, if there are mistakes, we will correct those mistakes.

There are many important areas in which certain points have been raised like 24 per cent investment in the small sector. Well, this is again an experiment. I would like to say that there is nothing final about it. If we find that the small sector or the tiny sector is being gobbled up by giving 24 per cent to the bigger ones then, I would like to assure the House that that will not be allowed. What we feel is, ancillarisation becomes much more easy by giving them a stake in the smaller sector. That was the idea for which this was done. But that is not final. If there is anything which tends to destroy the small sector, we can always change and bring it back to a stage where such things will not happen. As we go

along we will have to make of innovations. The direction is one of liberalisation; the direction is one of encouraging growth; and the direction is one of creating wealth for the people everywhere in this country.

One point on which all of us have to be careful. I agree on this point because we have to be a State which is not just oriented in making profits for the industry. We have to think of the workers, those who are the backbone of all industry in this country. And in any case, in a developing country like India, we cannot go on thinking of profits only. We will have to think basically of welfare of the people and on that score, I would like to make a very categorical statement that whether it is the Exit Policy or any other policy, we would not allow the interests of the workers to suffer in any way. On this, there will be no compromise.

A MEMBER : Will you allow participation of workers in the management?

PRIME MINISTER : There will be full encouragement to the participation of workers in the management. In fact, I have in front of me a proposal made by one of the labour leaders of this country, offering to take over one of the factories in Kanpur which was sick and which was running on losses. It would have been sold, or maybe, it would have been liquidated. He said, "Please don't do it. The workers will run it." And we agreed to that. However, if the approach is, "We will not allow the factory to close, but we will not run it and let the losses accumulate", then it is difficult.

A MEMBER : But you cannot feel the pulse of the workers.

PRIME MINISTER : This is the most important dimension of the new Policy. On this I would like to say that there will be no compromise. Already we have had meetings with them. I think the Finance Minister had one or two meetings and I was present at one of the meetings. We agreed that all these difficulties that are coming up both in industrialisation and when industries close down or are threatened with a close down the future of the workers and all such matters would have to be gone into. The Government will be very happy to talk to the trade union leaders of all States. They have agreed and I am very glad to say that this process has started in right earnest. This will not stop because ultimately industrialisation will have to take care of all the wings concerned. Because ultimately industrialisation will have to take care of all the wings concerned and we cannot go unilaterally leaving the interest of one of the wings behind. In this country that is not going to be possible.

Even in the question of technology, it is not a matter of unlimited technology being imported. This I have already made clear. Let us

understand that the technology, which we use at the moment, also has certain social goals, and the stage at which we find our social progress. So, everything is inter-dependent. We will take all these factors in all their aspects and we will see that industrialisation according to the new policy, goes ahead on certain very healthy lines and will not be allowed to create any of the complications that were created so far.

Sir, I would like to say that whatever discussions we are having with other countries, both in respect of foreign investment and the transfer of technology or import of technology, these are going on on a friendly basis. I am not quite sure that we will succeed in everything we are attempting because there are many imponderables in this process. But, I would say that the very first attempt that I would be doing is when I visit Germany after a few days. There has been a lot of enthusiasm on the other side. Certain hints have been given to us whereby I feel hopeful that in the case of industrialisation, investment and transfer of technology, we have a much better prospect now than we had expected in the past. I would like to say that the new policy has been hailed everywhere; within the country and outside the country. This cannot be accidental.

It is not an experimental policy. Life itself is an experiment from that point of view. What I am saying is that we have to implement this policy in right earnest and it is the decision of the Government that we will implement it. As we go along, if there is any difficulty we will remove it. That is all. It is not a mere experiment. It is not a cast iron policy, which we, in some other places, are in the habit of having. It is not a Policy like that. It is a Policy with broad outlines; it is a Policy with a very clear direction; it is a Policy with certain objectives. Given all these factors, it is bound to succeed and we will make it succeed.

Integrating Indian Economy into World Economy

I AM INDEED very happy to be associated with this function on the auspicious occasion of the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the

Speech at the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations, New Delhi, 7 October 1991

Federation of Indian Export Organisations. I congratulate all of you and all those who made this possible over the last twenty five years. I wish you a bright future, bright future for the exporters, bright future for the exports, and therefore, an equally bright future for the economy of the country.

This is indeed a happy occasion and on such occasions we generally talk of good things, things that please us, not things other than those which please us. So, I will confine myself only to such things. There is an occasion for everything; maybe when we meet on some other occasion, you come to me or I come to you, we will have to go into details, maybe we will have to face facts as they are and also do a little heart searching.

Friends, we have taken the plunge. Once you take the plunge, you don't go back. That is not our way. Having taken the plunge, there can be no half-way house and while taking the plunge, you have to take a full-flooded plunge, not a half-hearted plunge. Now, you will find that in the programme of reforms that the new Government has introduced, all these factors have been taken care of. There is no halfheartedness, there is no indecision, there is no hesitation and we are prepared to defend these changes to the hilt. And, what is most important in all this is that we have the consensus of the Parliament and the people. Now, what is there for us to be afraid of? The sky is the limit. We don't have to have any inhibition except the inhibition created by our own incompetence, of which there is no dearth, I am afraid to say. So, please go ahead. You have a very good advocate in Mr. Chidambaram. It is only a very fortunate client that can get a free advocate of his calibre. Now, I want an advocate of the same calibre; maybe I will have to engage him on some other occasion to defend me, to defend the Government.

If you have to be competitive, if you have to live in the new world, in the changed world with the new agenda, the new agenda of integrating Indian economy into the world economy, then there is hardly any choice for you. If you had built some wall, some notional ideological wall, it has to be dismantled, it has to be demolished. It stands demolished by the new policies. It is not something copied from others, let me say this even at the first instance. Let no one get the impression that we are copying other countries in bringing about these changes. No. We have deeply reflected on these changes as being necessary today in India's conditions. We have not done it in a hurry. We have not done it in a repentent mood. We did not first conclude that what we did for the last forty years was totally wrong and, therefore, we are putting it right. No. What we did earlier was right and what we are about

to do now, what we have decided to do now is again right. The circumstances have changed. The world has changed. India has changed.

Sometimes, I can't believe the change that has come over India. We have been growing with this change. We can see the change so clearly, sometimes it baffles us. I go to my village every two years, every three years, every year if you wish; the kind of change that I see there is quite baffling. And, when I go to places which I visited ten or fifteen years ago, I am just not able to recognise which is what, which building is where, which house is where. This is the kind of change that has come. So, we have to get integrated into a world if we are talking of one world. We have the ideal of the world being one family, so it is nothing new to us. In the Indian concept of looking at things, what we are about to do is just natural, there is nothing new in it. But we are entering into a new environment with which we were not hundred per cent familiar, not that we were completely unfamiliar. That was the boon of the great Jawaharlal Nehru's mixed economy. He did not shut India out of the world. At the same time, he did not throw India to the turbulence of the world before India was ready to integrate. Now, we are ready to integrate and, therefore, we are integrating.

Jawaharlal Nehru protected the Indian economy, he protected India as a mother protects a child. The mother does not carry a child all his life; she carries the child for some time, then leaves the child to play in the courtyard. Eventually he goes to school, he goes to the playground and sometimes gets black-eyes. The mother no longer bothers. Today, we don't have to bother any longer how many black-eyes our exporters are going to get. I am satisfied and convinced that this is the time to change and this is the methodology of change. So, let it be understood that this is a considered decision and that is why we got such a consensus. Ten years ago, we would not have been able to get this consensus. Anyone would know, Manubhai would know if he had introduced these things when he was the Commerce Minister, he would have been stoned, it would not have been possible. Today it is possible because we have come of age, Indian economy has come of age. Let us make the best out of this.

We know that quality, competitiveness in price and timely supplies are some of the well-known ingredients of a successful export policy. Now, can we honestly say that we hold a near monopoly in any particular area of exports? I am not sure. I am not an economist. I am not an exporter nor am I an importer. But I can say with certain amount of common sense and common

knowledge that there is not one item in which everyone looks to India and if India is not able to export then there is some disarray somewhere. That kind of a thing does not exist. The most successful of our exports seems to be brain. That is what we seem to be exporting year in and year out. Our engineers, our doctors, our scientists, our computer experts, seem to be the most sought after exports from India. I wish we had some other things to export. These were not the real things to export. But anyhow what has happened has happened.

We will have to see that this excellence and the capacity of our exporters, manufacturers, is fostered. I am prepared to go to any extent. I have no inhibitions as I said. Of course, once we take the plunge, we take. So, I can assure you that this is the line, this line is a relentless line, this will not stop. But the rest is naturally on you—on the exporters, on the manufacturers, on those who are the captains of the Indian industry and Indian finance. It is not on the Government any more. We were looking to the Government, we were pointing fingers towards the Government for everything that went wrong. Now, there is no one there at whom you could point a finger. Now, you will have to point the finger at yourselves. So, this is the difference between yesterday and today.

India is a very large country. If you want to export, you cannot forget the domestic market. We had a bitter experience about ten, fourteen or fifteen years ago when a bright idea occurred to one of our State Governments to export vegetables to the Gulf countries. Very good vegetables they used to grow. After three or four plane-loads went, they came back with very good price of course, vegetables became so costly in that city that all the housewives gheraod the Chief Minister's residence. I am just giving you a simple example where enthusiasm can sometimes be misplaced and the needs of the domestic population, domestic market clash with the needs of export. This clash should not be allowed to occur because then we will neither be able to satisfy our people here nor do successful exports. So, all these questions have to be gone into.

I am quite determined that if you all co-operate, in fact I co-operate with you, now the operation is in your hands, it is not the otherway round any more. This has to be taken care of. So, whatever you think is to be done by the Government, we can always have very close liaison. I would like that to continue. And, I would like to give you policy support on all matters that are reasonable, urgent and necessary for the exports of the country to grow.

There has to be lot of diversification in our exports. I have been speaking on this theme quite often these days because I find that in the agricultural sector, we have not done all that can be done by

way of promoting exports. This is an area which I commend to some of you who are interested to study more deeply and come up with ideas. It is possible to mount a campaign of exports of agricultural products, at the same time coupling it with greater production and greater facilities for production. Likewise, there may be some other, many other areas in which you could diversify. Please identify those areas. Let us not keep all our eggs in one basket because the changes are coming so rapidly everywhere that what is needed today from India may not be needed tomorrow from India and it may be substituted by some other substance, some other commodity or some other thing and we may become superfluous. Therefore, the diversification and also the need of other countries, importing whatever commodities they do whatever things they do from India, those needs, the changing needs of those countries and the markets of those countries have to be constantly under watch and review and only then the export tempo of the country, the overall export tempo of the country can be maintained.

Now these are the areas which you very well know. I don't have to expatiate on this point. But this watch is necessary and I am sure that with an experienced organisation such as yours, you will be able to maintain this watch successfully.

We are in the midst of changes. All the consequential changes that need to be brought in are being brought expeditiously, as Mr. Chidambaram said so much change within so short a time, almost breathtaking. Sometimes many friends tell me they were taking it easy because they did not expect the Government would be so fast. I have had occasions when I was called to meetings and I had to apologise for going there in time. That is what has happened here and you will find that this tempo we would like to maintain. There is hardly any room for complacency. Nothing has happened actually. What has happened is on paper. What has happened is in the psychology. What has happened is in the understanding of the people concerned about the changes. But that is only a part of the story. If people have to come, if industries have to come, if investments have to come, all this takes time. But what we had to do from our side, we have been able to do in time and in the manner in which it was expected. So, we do not want to be complacent and I am sure we will be doing the follow-up, the watch and whatever else needs to be done to tie-up the loose-ends will continue to be done.

There is a lot of talk about why the public sector in India has not come up to our expectations on the whole. Now, this is something which we have to go into. It is a totally different subject. But it is intimately connected with your job—job of exports. We

will do this review very shortly and we will come up with all the necessary tie-ups where export, import, indigenous production, indigenisation, all these things which are different facets of the same activity would have to be properly integrated in the new context. They are integrated in a different way until yesterday. They have to be re-integrated in a different way without running down any of these facets, without giving undue importance to any one facet. We have to again produce a harmonious whole and we cannot jettison anything that we have built so far. That is clear. But at the same time, it has to be much more useful, it has to be working as a member of the team, as a link in the chain and we cannot allow anything to go waste. So, all this has to be done imaginatively. We are engaged in that exercise. It will take a little more time. But that is not really immediately connected with exports, so that could wait. We would be consulting you on those aspects also in due course.

This is a very auspicious occasion. Once again, I would like to congratulate you and wish you well in your future endeavours over the next 25 years.

Trade Fairs Help World Economy

AT THE OUTSET, I must accord a warm welcome to our guests from abroad who are participating in this Fair. We call it a Fair, not just an exhibition. They are two different things. You go to a Fair, a *mela*, at which the participation of the public is also prominent. I remember, many many years ago when we came for the first time to Delhi, one of the important places to visit was this Fair. So, it has now assumed all-India importance. When students, tourists, visitors, when they happen to come to Delhi at this time of the year, they make it a point to visit the Fair. After a few days, I am sure it will be very difficult to walk anywhere in this campus. It will be jampacked with visitors, visitors who come with varied interests, who want to see different things according

Speech while inaugurating the India International Trade Fair 1991, New Delhi, 14 November 1991

to their taste, according to their likes and dislikes. So this is very appropriately called a Fair.

It has a serious purpose at the core of it. The core is that we want to integrate with the world. Indian economy wants to get integrated with the world. We have been doing it over the years. We have succeeded. We have had many countries exhibiting other products here. We have visited several stalls and we have come to know what is available where. We have also been pulled in different directions because of the competition between the same things manufactured by different countries and we have had this satisfaction of knowing in Delhi what is available abroad at least in some spheres and also telling the people of the world what is available in India. I believe lot of business gets transacted here by the end of the Fair. They give some figures; I don't remember what the figures are but I believe that the figures are increasing year after year. And as Indian industry comes of age, the Indian manufacturers are able to compete with their counterparts in other countries, we find more and more trade taking place, more and more give and take, more and more mutual consultation.

I particularly remember the Book Fairs that we have. In almost all the years that I have seen the Book Fairs, I was very impressed how the publishers from other countries come, how the publishers of India also improve year after year. We have specialised Fairs also when a particular type of industry is exhibited and we have products of all countries being shown here. I remember our late Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi going from stall to stall when we had this exhibition between India and Germany. Now, we have so many modifications, so many forms of the exhibitions, of the manifestations of the Fair that each one has its own importance and utility.

Today, as Mr. Chidambaram pointed out, we have undertaken a massive task, a task which has become necessary because in a particular direction when you start travelling there is no need in going slow deliberately when you know that you can walk, you can run, you can proceed more speedily. This is the logic of the whole thing. The process of liberalisation as you all know started in Indiraji's time really speaking. It gained momentum in Rajivji's time. But still there were people who were hesitant. Our policies had to be very carefully tailored to certain opinions available in the country, prevailing in the world and, therefore, we had to be circumspect. Today again, we find that the time has come when no such hesitancy will either be possible or desirable. If you really want to go and achieve a goal you have to go with the speed that is needed because if you do not really watch your speed, increase

it whenever it is needed, then you will fall behind. We have all these exigencies properly examined and we have taken these decisions with our eyes and ears open, with a full realization of all the implications and that is why this is a determined bid that we have started. In this respect, this Fair is of a particular importance. I am sure that this will be the precursor to much bigger Fairs where many many more countries will be represented and we will be able to get a deeper and closer integration with the world economy.

Yes, we have certain disadvantages. India is a developing country, although the development stage at which India finds herself is fairly advanced. Still we are a developing country. We have to be treated with certain amount of understanding. That we have to achieve on the diplomatic front between Heads of the State, Heads of Government between international institutions dealing with these matters. We have to create a climate where the difficulties faced by a country are fully appreciated by others. And we are not straight-jacketed into a programme which may or may not suit us. Ultimately it is the will of the people that counts in a democracy. Ultimately what we do for the people, for the masses, for the teeming millions, is what is important. It is not just a question of filling a form or conforming to a rule made by someone else. That rule should fit into our conditions.

Our policies should be tailored, should be properly and very carefully prepared, formulated not only to suit certain general philosophy which we have accepted but also suit the conditions prevailing in our country. So, this is a rather complicated exercise but we have to do it. There is no thumb rule for these things. You are dealing with human beings and therefore, we are engaged in this. The fine tuning has to be done from day to day. If today there is a greater restriction on imports, after a few months that restriction would have to be relaxed a little. But if you relax too much again you will find yourself getting into trouble. So this fine tuning needs a daily feature and we are doing it to the best of our ability.

I can assure you, I can assure everyone concerned, whether here or abroad, that this process is irreversible. The reason is simple. There is no way of reversing a process of this nature and magnitude. There is no way of swimming against the current. We know what is good for India. Panditji knew what was good for India when he laid down the policy. Whenever our leaders modified that policy, reoriented that policy, gave a few fine points to that policy, finishing touches to that policy, they knew what exactly was wanted at that particular time. We are no exceptions to that. In our own humble way, we are giving a turn to the policy,

a direction to the policy which is absolutely essential in today's circumstances. We are pragmatic but at the same time we are not opportunistic. We forsake basics, but at the same time so much can be built on the same base in different ways and we are building what is needed for the country today and for the country's economic integration with the world and that is what we really want to achieve.

I do not want to make a long speech. I only wanted our friends to know that what we are doing, we are doing deliberately, after a good deal of thought and we do not want to reverse it or to take it into a different direction because our direction has been determined after very careful watch and deliberations.

I have great pleasure in inaugurating the Fair. I hope it will succeed in the purpose for which it is being held.

Let Us Face Challenges Together

I AM HAPPY to be present on this occasion of the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the Forum. I have known this for some time and I remember that occasion when as Foreign Minister I participated in one of your functions—seminar, perhaps.

I don't have to give you the background of what has been done, the details of what we are attempting to do and how all this had come about. I think that is common knowledge by now and I don't want to repeat all that to those who already know, some of whom know things even better than I do. So, I shall skip all that. I will just tell you where I find myself and perhaps that is where I could derive some insight from you who have been very close watchers of the scene, those who have been commenting, those who have been wishing well and those who have been projecting future trends, warning the Government where necessary, perhaps patting it on the back where warranted. So, I think I have come to this forum at a very appropriate time and I am glad about that.

We started on a fairly ambitious programme of reform. I cannot pretend that this is something startlingly new and no one thought about it earlier, particularly no Government thought about it earlier. The process of liberalisation was started as you all know some years ago. In fact, I remember, it started during Mrs. Gandhi's second term of Prime Ministership. But of course it was done leisurely; it was also difficult at that time. Then the process was somewhat quickened by Rajivji and I distinctly remember having watched with some interest the clash of ideas, the heat that was produced during this clash time and again when such matters came up for discussion, both in the Cabinet and outside.

I headed a small sub-committee which was supposed to vet the White Paper on Public Enterprises. The White Paper did not eventually see the light of day and for a very good reason—some of us did not want it to see the light of day. We went into it in great detail and we found that it bristles with controversies and frankly we were in no position to take on those controversies. Perhaps, comments were made about indecision and so on. One could call it an indecision, but it was a well-considered indecision; it was a decision not to take a decision. And, that is how ultimately it was taken over by the Prime Minister. He promised that he would look into it himself, and kept in his custody until such time as we consider it proper and expedient to bring it out. That time has been prolonged by two years in effect.

So, what we had started doing in July-August 1991 was exactly what we wanted to do after the 1989 elections on the assumption that we would come to power. So, there has been a continuity and there has been a break; they are both there.

You will find that in the reformed policy many of the ideas contained in that White Paper are also incorporated. I know it for certain because when I read the new text I could easily see where it has come from, at least a major part of it. So, you can see that there has been a continuity. It hasn't suddenly come up in 1991. Maybe we could have continued with the old policy for some more time but meanwhile we found ourselves in a rather desperate situation where all these reforms have been accelerated, they have been pushed through with certain speed which perhaps would not have been there if things had been normal. So, the direction was there, the intention was there, we know exactly where things were going but the speed with which they had had to be ushered in 1991, that speed is the special feature of these reforms.

I just came across one small portion in your magazine and this perhaps very well brings out the stage and the mood which I find myself in. And, this is what it says: "There is a real danger of the

reform programme being slowed down, if not given up altogether in midstream. The remedies then will be far worse than the disease,” (This is written by Tapan Dasgupta). Now, if I had been dictating my own thoughts, I wouldn’t have done better than this. At the same time, I would like to tell you that what Dasgupta thinks will happen, namely, reversing the policy or stopping the policy altogether, giving it up altogether. I don’t think that option is available to this Government any more. It is a consolation to me because I have no choice, I have to go forward, it is a one way street; on any other side, I have red lights. So, come what may, I have to go, I have to pass through. So, on that score I would like to set at rest any doubt, any apprehension lingering anywhere in anyone’s mind that partly due to the fact that I have no alternative and partly because the government also is concerned, partly because it is nothing new but it is a continuation of something we started long ago. For all these reasons there is no possibility whatsoever of the policy or the reform being given up altogether. I do not envisage such a thing.

So, having disposed of that particular doubt, now let us come to where we are, come to see where we are.

I have been inviting industries, investment from abroad from here, but I know that if really industry comes as a torrent the country does not have the infrastructure even to sustain it, to absorb it. How much can we absorb? Go to States, look at the State Electricity Boards, what is their condition? Today, it is very difficult to point out even one or two States where they can take on new industries and give them power to whatever extent it is needed. Marginally, yes. To some extent, yes. But the way they are functioning, if really people take you seriously and come with all the industries that you need.

What is the point in calling for investment when you are not ready, when the country is not fully ready, fully geared, fully prepared, to take that industry? They cannot get electricity from there, they cannot get land and water from there, from wherever they come. So, the follow up of the reform policy is the readiness or the process of making the stage ready to take on the new industry, the new investment, now this is the first thing we are going to do. We cannot really show results immediately. It is not that you cannot start an industry, it is not that everywhere things are absolutely dismal, but by and large for the kind of investment that you are expecting, you should be able to absorb that and give it the infrastructure that it needs.

So, the major part of the Eighth Plan has to be married to this infrastructure and the expected investment. If you have water at

one place and land at another place, then how do you marry them? We have many places where you have enormous quantities of land and water available. You have many other places where you have enormous areas of land available but you have to go 500 feet below the ground if you want to have any water and even when you get water, the recuperation may be bad, what do you do? So, it is not everywhere that you can have an industry and it depends on how much water an industry needs, and then you have the environmental problems. All this co-ordination that is to be brought about and it is not going to be easy. We are attending to it. We are closely cross-examining them who are incharge of those Ministries. We are questioning them. We are asking them why a particular project, maybe which had attracted the attention of the World Bank or some other institution which they had agreed to fund, has not been there, what is the reason? Is it because two Chief Ministers are fighting over it? Is it because there is an agitation going on like it happened in the case of the Vizag Steel Plant twenty years ago? Whether it is political, economic or administrative, mostly it is administrative—all these bottlenecks have to be cleared.

We will see exactly where the shoe is pinching in the case of each of these projects and this again is micro-planning. I can't say I want 38,000 KWs of power, where is it? You can't get 38,000 KWs of power, MWs of power at one place. So, we have to go into all these details and we are doing that. Now, if you don't see anything happening on the surface, don't think nothing is happening anywhere. These are the things that we have to take up as a necessary corollary of the reform.

Now, is it true to say that the new spirit or the new enthusiasm has seeped down to the Collectors' level or the Tehsildars' level? Ultimately, who is it who gives land. It is not the Prime Minister of India. It is the Tehsilder or may be the Revenue Inspector, may be the Patwari. Now, it has to seep down to those levels and this has always been the bane of Indian reform. Whatever you try to do in this country, it emanated from Delhi and probably stopped at the State Capital. In very few cases it went to the Collectors but after that it just stopped. Money was sent, we don't know where it went. People were told that this was coming. They expected it for some time, then forgot about it; they thought that this is just one of those promises that Government makes with no intention of fulfilling it. We have lost our credibility. People have become cynical.

So, all down the line there has to be a reform in the thinking of the people, in the responses of the people; people on the one hand,

administration on the other and this is going to be a stupendous problem. Whatever you might say, whatever you might comment, this is going to be the real problem. Having had some experience of those levels of administration, I can tell you with certain amount of certainty, certain amount of personal experience, that it is going to be very difficult. We will have to go and sit with the villagers if you wish. I have done that before; I may have to do it again, I may have to send somebody to go and sit in a village just to see what the problems are, just to sample the problems there. You don't have to go and sit in every village, you have to go and talk to those people at those levels at least as a sampling of the problems. So, this is what we have to do. Over the next few months you will not find anything happening in Delhi.

Mr. Mathur, Secretary (Industry) told me at one of our review meetings just day before yesterday that they have taken it up with the State Governments, they are finding the response good but the response is not the response that we find from word of mouth, response is something which has to come actually, someone has to say, "All right why do you go in for section 10 or whatever of the Land Acquisition Act, I will give you my land." You can imagine the situation where a farmer or someone comes forward and says "Come on, have it in my village" or a Sarpanch comes forward and says "Have it in my village." During the Community Development days we created a healthy competition between Sarpanches and important people in several villages. We wanted two acres of land for a Primary Health Centre. If you really wanted to buy it, it could cost you Rs. 50,000 even in those days. But people came forward and gave up the land, donated the land.

Now, we want people to come forward and give us all that is needed. When electricity was wanted by the village, people came forward with their bullock-carts to carry all your poles, otherwise you would take eternity to get a lorry or something and finally end up with a report that no lorry can go to this village, therefore we cannot take it up. So, unless you have the response of the people at the grass roots level, even this will not come about. And, if you go into the field of small industry, the tiny sector, then this becomes even more applicable. In fact, we have not attended to the tiny sector so far. But we have to attend to it because there are lots of misapprehensions and misunderstandings saying that whatever reforms have been brought in they will just gobble up the tiny sector and there won't be anything like a tiny sector or the small-scale sector any more. I don't agree. Neither it is the intention of the Government nor is it going to happen if we go about it the right way and we intend to go about it the right way. You cannot have only the big industries. You have to have the

small industry and the tiny industry, you have to have the agro-industries on a very large scale in this country.

Now, we have a picture before us, a picture which looks complicated but it is clear enough. People coming from the villages exactly know what kind of industries are possible in a village. We will have to keep those industries there otherwise people will come to the cities. Now, almost forty per cent of India's population seems to be living in towns and cities. You cannot allow this to go on unless you give them something apart from agriculture where they live. Otherwise the migration to cities will not stop. So, we have to look into the tiny sector; we have not done that so far. In the next one month or fifteen days, whenever we can find time, we will have to relentlessly follow up the co-ordination between the sectors—big, small and tiny.

We are at that housekeeping stage where nothing is seen from outside but intense activity is going on. I am still not satisfied because the co-ordination between all these levels, starting from Delhi, going down to the Panchayat level, is not easy. We have some experience. It is not as if we are starting it for the first time. But this experience has been mixed in the past. We went to places where there was ready response. We did not go to place where the thing was needed. We did not go to tribal areas. Today, I have my doubts, even after all this exercise whether the earlier policy of going to a no-industries district will get messed up or will it be implemented in this spirit in which we wanted to implement it. Now, did we implement it at that time. If you go into that you will find that most of the industries which were supposed to come in a backward district finally ended up in another district which was not so backward. So, there were methods of getting around these difficulties, they did it, I know it, I also took one or two industries to my constituency. You see, these things happen. So, if you could not take an industry to a totally non-industry district, with no infrastructure whatever anyway, what is the point in having that rule? You have to give me infrastructure or you will have to settle for something less idealistic than what you had before but more practical.

These people have started what they call these, Growth Centres. I do not know much about the Growth Centres and when they were started I was dealing with something else and in my time in any case we had these District Industries Centres. Maybe they have now changed the sign board and kept the same content, maybe I will have to go into that but the Growth Centres have come in most of the no-industries districts. I have no complaint but if Growth Centres have come in very few no-industries districts and mostly

they have come where the industrialist feels he can go safely and start and get his returns quickly, then I have a problem: What do I do with the other districts? What do I locate in those other districts? Now, I have not gone into it. Maybe they have thought about it. Experienced people have been working on it. I don't think that they have missed this point. But I will have to convince myself. I will have to be satisfied that it has been done. If it has not been done, we will have to find out. We will sit with the Chief Ministers again.

You see, what has been happening. We prepare something and send it to the State Governments. In turn they have their own bureaucracy, they have their own administration, it seeps through all those lanes and bylanes and we do not know whether it gets lost. So, I have now started taking on the Chief Ministers saying, "You are responsible, I am responsible. But if you want me to be responsible I want you to be responsible. It is a three- legged race between a Prime Minister and the Chief Minister. Two legs are tied, you will have to come alongwith me, I will drag you or if I don't come, you drag me along. But we have to go to the same spot. You can't be pulling me in a different direction." I am very happy to say that cutting across parties, cutting across politics, cutting across personalities, I am finding something like an unprecedented response from the Chief Ministers, whether it is in the NIC which deals with totally different subjects or in the NDC, again a totally different subject or just a meeting for the Public Distribution System, they all come. I don't generally expect a Chief Minister to come to a meeting where only Public Distribution System, Fair Price Shop are discussed but when Chief Ministers have found it necessary and rewarding enough, important enough to come and attend this meeting, there is something happening in their minds and one has to be proud about it, one has to be happy about it.

Day after tomorrow on the first of January, true to my promise, I am starting the new reformed Public Distribution System in Barmer, one of the most backward areas in the country (in Rajasthan) and in 1700 blocks. Now, some work has gone into that. I made that promise on the fifteenth of August and between then and now we have decided to do it and we are going to do it. Now, you will find that we are really attending to the problems and when this starts if I have to rapport with the grass roots-level on any programme which gives them the relief, then as of right I can ask them to respond to what is good for them. Once the rapport is established, then I have no problem. I can see that the village through political parties, even without political parties. If

you have a system there functioning, if you have a structure there functioning, that structure will respond. This is the new link for the first time which we have to establish. We have found to our great surprise that we have all the institutions necessary but we don't have even one of the institutions really working. This is a strange thing.

Mr. Subramaniam came from Maharashtra and told me that he has got a very good scheme for giving employment to the extent to which we had promised in the elections. Now, we went into it, we found that what he was suggesting was feasible and the institutions that were to take on this very stupendous task were also available, but we found that they are all in the moribund state and those who are running them cannot run them. We will have to put other people, we will have to give them a new life, a kind of new thrust etc. So, institutional framework is there but the spirit, the soul is missing and that is what we have to instill and this is much more difficult than creating a new institution. Instilling a new life into a moribund institution has always proved to be much more difficult and if we want to really strap it and start something else people will start saying that we are going in for duplication, triplication. So, we will have to make a choice.

How do we really activate these institutions which have been totally inactive over the years? Maybe they are in debt, maybe they are not able to pay their bills, electricity bills in their offices—even this is possible. So, we will have to actually dust them once again and put them back on their feet. All the announcements of policies, all those things, all the high profile things have been completed. If there is something more to be done, if you suggest something, I am prepared to take suggestions from any quarter.

But the housekeeping job I am sure will not be as visible as high profiled, as one would like it and that is why for the next four or five months, maybe if we go underground please be prepared for it, don't think that nothing is happening under the ground. The activity will shift to these commonplace things which are not visible from outside. But we will have to do them because unless we do that it will not be possible for us to get this policy and the reform and all the rest of it really translated into action, translated into beneficial industrialisation or other activity.

This is what I wanted to tell you. In fact, I came here more to establish a sort of continuing rapport with you. It is not easy for all of us to meet at short intervals. Everyone is busy but I would like to assure you that we want to learn. Now, I am not one of those who think that they know everything already. All I know is how little I know. So, I am ready to accept ideas from wherever

they come and discuss whenever it is possible and this is how we go on learning from experience and learning from discussion. This has been very much in our heritage. The Guru always expects the Shishya to question him. That is what is called *Pariprashnayam*. A disciple who doesn't question his Guru is absolutely useless and that the Guru also knows. So, this questioning, this quest should go on and if you test what is being done very critically and say that what should happen is not happening we shouldn't take it as criticism, we should take it as a positive contribution to the process of thinking. This is how I look at it. Let us see if this is going to work in this country. Things are not easy but nothing is easy, nothing has ever been easy in this country or in any country for that matter. So, we are in for difficult times, we are in for challenging tasks. Let us all come together, put our heads together to face these tasks.

I have great pleasure in inaugurating your Silver Jubilee Celebrations.

The New Economic Policy for the Good of the People

I AM VERY happy to meet you all. First time when I came here on way to Mowad, I had given an assurance that Ramtek will get not one but two sentinels. Today I want to reiterate that I consider Ramtek as my constituency. Sometimes when two cows feed a calf, it becomes very healthy. Similarly I and Tej Singh Rao Ji both will try to exploit the possibilities available in this area for the benefit of the people.

I want to tell you that there will be no default in this and there will be no hesitation on my part.

It is true that I cannot do everything for one area but I shall continue to help you as much as possible. You should forget from where I fought the elections, from where I was elected. The Prime Minister of India is of entire country. He does not belong to a particular area.

Speech at Bhumi puja ceremony of Nippon Denro ISPAT Ltd., Kalmeshwar, Maharashtra, 7 March 1992

When I came here for the first time, it was to console and help the people of Mowad as much as possible who were in distress. Today I have come on a happy occasion.

Many changes have come in our country—some in our outlook and some in the outlook of others. Today in our country some people want to sow the seeds of dissension between one class and another, one caste and another, one religion and another, so that they may fight with each other and are divided into different camps. We have to negate this.

This was the decision of the Congress and as a soldier of Congress, as a successor of Rajiv Gandhi, I have no other option. The only available option is to restructure the society in such a way that no fissiparous forces should survive, there should be no such tendency. We have to make efforts to build the society, the nation and to strengthen the bonds of unity. I am working in this direction and my colleagues are working in this direction. The people understand this. I have met many people. I address lakhs of people. The people come from villages for the meetings and I feel happy when I see that they understand what I say. I am fully aware of the experiences in the villages, condition in the villages and the problems faced by the villagers. So I do not find any difficulty while talking to them and they also do not find any difficulty in understanding what I say.

Mittal Saheb has set up a factory here. Earlier people used to think that if an outsider opened a factory here what would they gain? I remember that first time when I came to Kalmeshwar in 1985 after the elections, there was a dispute and a quarrel. There were two groups. I was a harassed person—whether to go with this group or that group. They organised two different meetings. Both entered into a competition to show their affection for me and I became a victim of that affection. The crux of the matter was that some people had a grievance that they were not reaping the benefits of the factory set up here. Their expectations had not been met. They were not getting the jobs, the employment due to them. I immediately invited them for a meeting. I also invited Mittal Saheb to Nagpur. After the talks, I sent the Collector to that place and got complete list of the local people who got jobs in the factory. Now, who is this Mittal Saheb? He is a very good industrialist and has earned a lot of fame outside. He has set up a factory in the West Indies. He made a lot of efforts for this factory. Why cannot our industrialists establish factories in their own country? While Indonesia reaps the benefits of these industries, Mexico enjoys the benefits and West Indies also gets these benefits then why should India be deprived of these benefits? After all they

were born in this country. So they own something to the country of their birth. And I may tell you that many of our industrialists have made a mark abroad. They take engineers from here who train the people in those countries. This does not mean that the people of those countries would not get anything. I have seen in Indonesia, in Malaysia and many other places that our industrialists, our doctors, our scientists, our engineers enjoy a very good reputation. They are not involved in any kind of disputes because they are busy in their own work which they do to the best of their ability. We are proud of them. We want that these people, whom we call NRIs (Non-Resident Indians) should do the same thing for this country also. After all they are our brothers. More educated, went there and brought good name to the country as well as to themselves. They have earned some money also. Now they want to bring that money back to India, to work in India.

If our own people want to come back, if they want to set up some factories in India, work here, help in our development projects, should we put obstacles in their way as soon as they land here? It is not fair. So we said that the government should not put obstacles and we would provide them certain facilities. Today our NRIs are in great spirits. Sometimes doubts were raised whether this policy would work or not. Would this minority government survive. Let me say that this government will survive its full five years term. Its economic and industrial policies will also continue not only for five years, but always because we are going to make these irreversible. Let somebody explain to me whether there can be any better policy than this. I am ready to accept. It was asked many times. Many discussions took place but nothing came out. Nobody suggested a better way. Yes, this policy was condemned in speeches: but condemning does not help, it will not fill an empty stomach. Today you cannot shut yourself in a country. Unless you allow fresh air from all sides, you will feel suffocated. Mahatma Gandhi had himself said that he wanted to keep his windows wide open so that fresh air comes from all sides. Yet we should not be blown away by that air. We Indians will not leave our Indianness. For us the interests of the country will be supreme. But we do not want to live in a prison, we do not want our country to be a prison and put a ban on people coming from outside. If people came from outside, we are willing to work with them. If there is wrong person among them, we have our Home Ministry to check that. To presume that all people who come from abroad are bad is not correct. It is also wrong to think that all of them are very truthful like Raja Harish Chandra. So we have to see whether they are good or bad people. We have done away with licenses and permits. People have to run with a small piece of paper to ten seats. It is

not known how many more persons are behind these ten people. You all have experience of this. We want to get rid of these intricacies. It is true that our country today is not capable of producing all the things. There is a shortage of many things. We have to import them. There are some industries which are very sensitive like those related to our defence. We do not want to open these because our strength may receive a jolt. So we have reserved some industries for which licensing will be there but not for the rest. There seems to be nothing wrong with this. When an industry expands, employment opportunities increase. Many people will get self-employment. When a township comes up, people get many facilities and the factory will further expand. In this way we shall industrialise our country. I would like to emphasise that this policy will continue and there is no possibility of any error in this. This will provide new opportunities to our young men. We are adopting new technology which our boys and girls will learn. If one feels that he can improve upon this technology by further research, he can get a chance for that. This would be possible because he would be working on new machines. If these machines were not available here, where would he have learnt this? Perhaps he might have to go to the USA or to Europe or to some other place.

Now we are making computers in India. Seven or eight years ago, people had not even heard of computers. More than a hundred, perhaps 150 companies are manufacturing computers. There is no such thing which is not built here. Once a new equipment comes, people adopt the technique and pattern and manufacture their own equipment. That is the special quality of our artisans. But we do not give them an opportunity and the artisans are engaged in age-old activities. In our villages and countryside, our artisans, carpenters, ironsmiths, potters and those engaged in smaller profession are using the same old tools which were being used 200 years ago or 500 years ago. So we have decided that a scheme should be launched in all villages to improve their tools and thereby their productivity. I had called a meeting of those who are looking after this. We want that in the next five years, our artisans should use better quality tools so that their income can grow and their productivity can grow. We have to take care of villages, cities, smaller towns and all alike. We have to think about everyone's welfare. This is the crux of the new policy. I want to emphasise that this policy is good for the country, good for the people, good for all classes of people, good for all religions. This policy will also enable us to promote national integration and mutual faith.

III

Science and Technology

Applying Science and Technology for Common use

I AM HAPPY that for the first time this award has been instituted and I would like to congratulate those who have received these awards this morning. One can see an expanding activity, expanding field of activity in electronics in the whole world and India can be no exception. In fact, we should be one of the leaders in the field and I am sure efforts by all of you and many more will enable India to find its rightful place. We have lots of uses for electronics. In fact the government is not fully aware of all these uses. We are now trying to think up new uses because where we have been applying electronics we find things have been improved, efficiency has been improved, costs have been brought down. Even when there are good results still there is a resistance to change. Now either it takes the form of agitation on the assumption that any modernisation, introduction of electronics, computers, etc. will throw people out of employment or just because there is a mystery about these things and the process of demystification has not been done as it ought to have been done. We have started this in the schools, in the class programmes, but that is not really been effective. Most probably money has been lacking and I understand that we have not been able to introduce computers and these courses in as many institutions as we wanted to in the Seventh Five Year Plan. I do hope that in the Eighth Plan all these deficiencies will be removed and may be, we will have to make up for lost time. I have not had an occasion to look into the contours of the Plan but whenever I do so I do think that this will have to be done. We have lots of new clients for you in the government. I have requested that to get all the UPSC examinations done centrally so that you don't have to go and get question papers printed in our presses and get them leaked out and have a problem every time we do it. It should be possible to connect all the centres with the central place and it should be possible for all the examinees to get the question paper at the same time, at the same moment all over the country. I understand that it can be done. I know it can be done. The second thing which I have announced and about which I have been feeling very strongly for years and years is the updating of land records in the villages that is where you actually go to the

Speech while giving away the awards for excellence in electronics,
New Delhi, 24 August 1991

field. Such a sophisticated science and technology which one expects generally to be confined to the cities travels down to the last village to the last proprietor. Unless this is done I am afraid most of the problems that we face in the villages—problems of litigation, problems of law and order, problems of fraud—all these things will continue and perhaps lead to more and more complications in future. So the time has come when we have to minimise all these things by some method and at the same time not very complicated. Villagers with average intelligence should use it which is user friendly. Then of course, it will be accepted. In the Defence Ministry for instance, it has been a horrendous task for retiring officers or Jawans to get pension granted to them any time within two years; two years is a long time. Why should it be so? It is because people there would rather go on strike than do their duty. They do not realise that people going on strike in those departments cause a lot of distress to lot of families every year; I don't know how many. Perhaps 60,000, 70,000, 80,000 people retire and if they do not get their papers completed, they do not get their pensions granted in time, what happens to them? These are some of the man made difficulties which need to be removed and they cannot be removed by the human agency any longer because those agencies have got other motivations. They are not really helping in expediting matters. Here we will have to substitute. So far as employment is concerned, I do not believe that this is going to cut employment, I believe that employment will increase but employment will be of a different kind. If there is a typist and if he has to be trained or retrained for a computer, it won't take more than 10 days, 15 days or maybe in some cases two or three days. But if he is not inclined to undergo even two days training then we come across a difficulty. So it is a question of constant motivation, maybe some incentives are also built into it. So the non-elite application of any of the new science and technology is the essence of the whole thing and I am sure that with the advent of new young men from middle classes from classes which do not really answer the description of the elite helps understanding the need of the common people, of the ordinary people and I hope there will be a much better much brighter future for this activity.

IRS-1B Launched

NINE HUNDRED KILOMETRES above the surface of the earth, India's second indigenous Remote Sensing Satellite is circling the earth. IRS-1B was launched successfully at 19 minutes past noon today, Indian time, from Baikanour Cosmodrome in the Soviet Union.

All systems and subsystems of IRS-1B satellite have been designed and fabricated indigenously. It weighs less than a thousand kilogrammes and carries three sets of state-of the-art imaging cameras.

Our nations's most experienced hands are controlling the satellite at the ISRO Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC) Spacecraft Control Centre at Peenya, Bangalore. This is connected to other ISRO tracking ground stations at Lucknow and Mauritius. During the initial phases of the mission, ground stations of foreign space agencies located in the USSR, Kenya, USA and Germany are assisting in monitoring the performance of the satellite.

Remote sensing is an important area of space applications all over the world today. For a developing country with diverse geological features, it is critically relevant in providing vital inputs for the management of our vast land and ocean resources.

The successful launch of IRS-1B marks our commitment to use space technology to provide operational services on a continued and assured basis in the vital areas of natural resources management. It also represents a continuation of our commitment to use science for peaceful, constructive and developmental ends which can be transferred into areas of tangible benefit for our people. We are determined, with the support of our Parliament and people, not only to preserve the position of Indian science at the frontiers of professional excellence and international recognition, but to make it a vital instrument in fulfilling national needs.

I am sure the House would wish to join me in extending our felicitations to the Scientists, Engineers and supporting staff of the Indian Space Research Organisation whose dedicated efforts have brought this great success to the nation. This reaffirms our pride in being Indian.

Indian Research to suit Indian Conditions

I AM HAPPY to be here today to celebrate the fiftieth birthday of CSIR. It is a happy occasion to reflect proudly on our achievements, an occasion to thank the myriad people, both high and low, who have contributed to make the CSIR one of the largest R&D organisations in the world. Equally, this is an occasion to look back and think whether the CSIR has accomplished its mandate and examine how it can serve the nation better.

On this day, we pay tribute to Sir Ramaswamy Mudaliar and, of course, to the great Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru who established and nurtured the CSIR during its early and formative years. Panditji was very clear in his mind on what the objectives of the CSIR and other research laboratories ought to be. While laying the foundation of this Institute in January 1947—where we have assembled today—he succinctly defined the objective of not only the NPL (National Physical Laboratory) but in a sense the CSIR laboratories, when he said: “The primary purpose of this Institute that rises on this site will be the removal of poverty of India’s millions.” It sounds so familiar. We have been saying this ever since he said this for the first time long ago. It is fortunate that in the initial years of its development, CSIR had a man of Panditji’s vision and the pre-eminent Dr. Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar, Director of the CSIR, at the helm of its affairs. The credit for the expeditious and systematic establishment of a chain of laboratories for scientific and industrial research, covering diverse areas, mainly goes to these two giants.

Over the past fifty years, CSIR has succeeded in ushering in a culture of scientific research. CSIR has pioneered R&D in several new areas such as solar and wind energy, oceanography and molecular biology. Both on the scientific and technological sides, CSIR has an impressive record of achievements. It has also served as a training ground for a number of talented scientists and technologists who are now engaged in research and development in many fields.

Friends, here I venture to make a departure from the speech that I am supposed to deliver. I would like to make use of this opportunity to say something that has been troubling my mind.



*Giving away awards for excellence in electronics, New Delhi,
24 August 1991*



*With CSIR Young Scientist Awardees, New Delhi,
26 September 1991*



*Inaugurating 'Discovery of India' Exposition, Bombay,
1 November 1991*



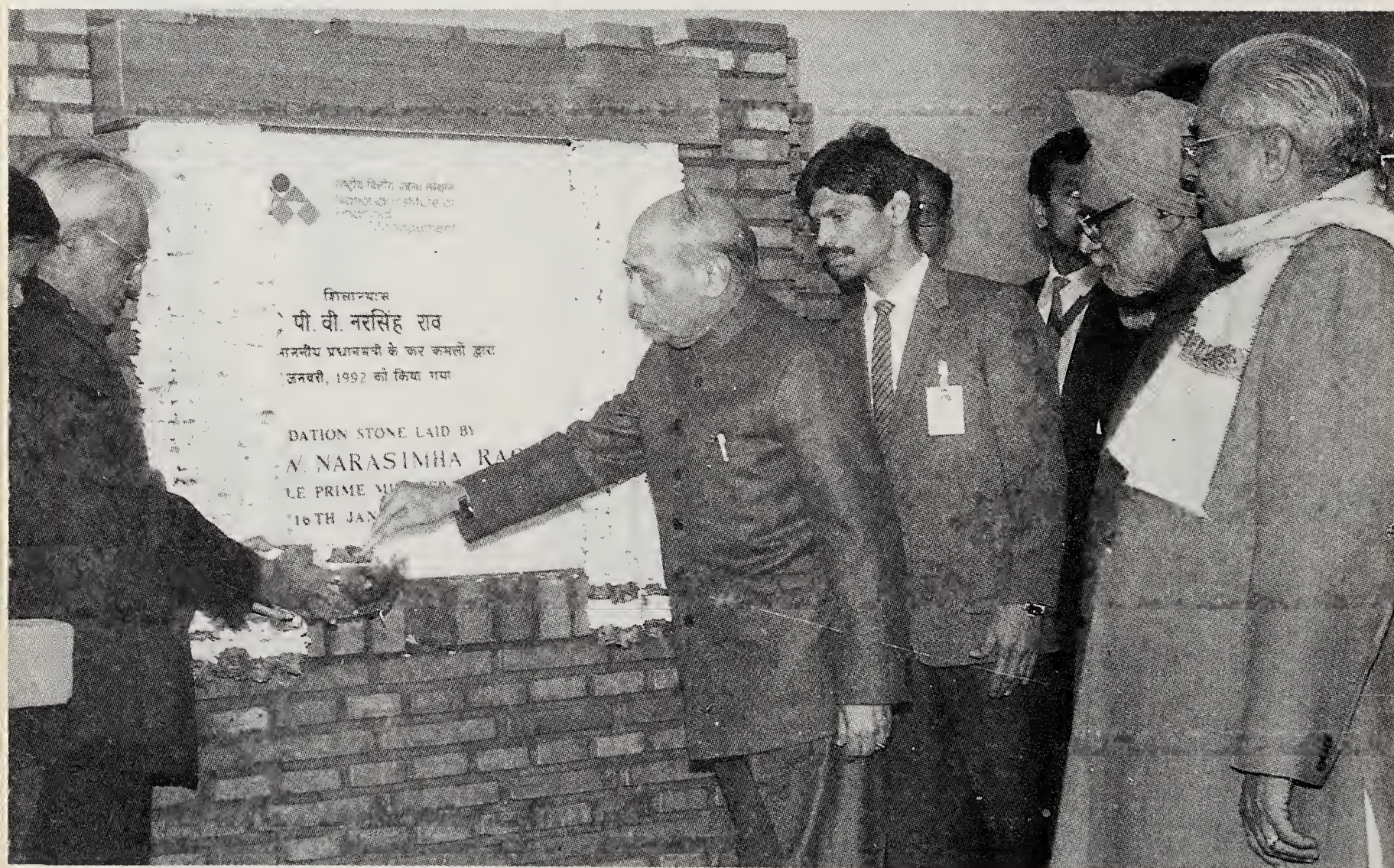
Inaugurating Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), New Delhi, 7 October 1991



Inaugurating India International Trade Fair, New Delhi, 14 November 1991



*Addressing the World Economic Forum meeting, New Delhi,
18 November 1991*



*Laying the foundation-stone for the National Institute of Financial
Management, Faridabad, 16 January 1992*

In a country like India, science and technology is absolutely necessary. But it is very very costly sometimes. What do we do about it? Talking of CSIR, I remember something that happened way back in 1954-55. The Collector of my district said in one of our meetings that there was a proposal to adopt some districts in the country by the CSIR. He said he was recommending to the State Government to include our district (Karim Nagar) in the scheme. As I came to know that CSIR was a prestigious institution and that a lot of benefit would accrue to the district, I rushed to Hyderabad, used my influence and got the district included in the first list of districts adopted by CSIR. I thought that the district must have really been transformed following the adoption. But, when I went there after a few years, I did not find any trace of transformation. I wondered what the CSIR had been doing all these years in the district.

So, I would like the scientists to come out of their self-made prisons, free themselves for a while from their laboratories and go to the CSIR Districts. Let us have a report on how the districts are looking now—whether they are looking any better, worse, or different from the adjacent district. If the scheme is still in force, because we have an uncanny method of changing schemes midway, if the scheme is still there, if my district still happens to be one of the districts adopted by CSIR, I urge you to find out what has happened. For quite some time, except for me and the Collector, no one in the district ever knew about the adoption by the CSIR. So much for our public relations. So much for our contact with the people. Panditji told us that science is meant for the poor millions of India. So, how do we really interact, with whom do we interact while doing the work of the CSIR? This aspect is very important.

For years I had tried to understand how a district was being taken care of, what were the mechanics through which the people of the district were contacted, if ever; and who takes care of the problems of the people, understanding them first, and telling the people how a particular problem is being tackled or solved. These links do not seem to exist. I really don't know what the position is now. I am talking about the situation that prevailed, say, twelve or fifteen years ago. I have been following up on this in relation to that particular district of mine. I do find a lot of improvement, a lot of development that has come about. But I don't see the stamp of CSIR in that district. That is my complaint.

It means that while we are doing a lot of work in the CSIR, the work—the research—does not necessarily relate to the problems of the poorest of the poor in this country. Therefore, CSIR would be well-advised to take note of this on this very auspicious occasion.

We have made great strides in technology, in scientific research. There can be no two opinions about that. I admire the work done, the hours of toil put in by our scientists. But I must say that they should reach the people and what they do should relate to the problems of the people.

We have been talking about vaccines. I must refer here to one of the standing demands I have been making on the scientific community. You have vaccines in this country, some being imported, some being made here. By the time this vaccine reaches the village, it loses its potency. We must have a cold chain, starting from the state headquarters down to the last village in a tribal area where it has to be administered, if we are to preserve the vaccine's potency. This cold chain is broken because of various factors. I don't have to describe them. Why should a vaccine deteriorate with temperature? I would like to put this question before the scientific community. Don't tell me that I must build the entire cold chain, and don't tell me that if the vaccine loses its effect it is because of the failure of the cold chain. You know, as of now, we can't afford to have the cold chain right down to the remote village.

Our ancestors, may be 1,000 years ago or 2,000 years ago, prepared medicines which did not lose their efficacy with the passage of time. Sometimes, the older the medicine the better it was. Why is it that we can't prepare vaccines like that? In Ayurveda, if a medicine is 200 years old, it is considered more efficacious. And it costs more; it is not easily available. It could be obtained only from very few places, from very few families with long hereditary medical tradition. An ayurvedic pill, if it is available for the same purpose, would be much more acceptable and convenient to the people than a whole cold chain being constructed just to transmit from one point to another, a small vial of vaccine. We just cannot afford it.

So, your technology, your scientific research should be not only relevant, it should also be affordable. We can't go on getting money from the IMF or the World Bank to import medicines, medicines that are not really suitable to our conditions. They may be good if we can afford them. If we can't then what do we do? We can't remain backward. Hence, the challenge before our scientists is different, is more formidable. It is not a question of getting something from outside, doing the reverse technology or reverse engineering and prepare something, label it and sell it in the huge Indian market. We must do something totally different. We will have to redefine the goals of our research, the goals of our technology and determine what kind of technology is good for India.

I have been talking about tractors. We have Massey Ferguson, we have international, we have all the known tractors. But, we don't have a tractor which can run or which can work in a two acre piece. We need 2,000 acres for a tractor. We need 500 acres for a tractor. A tractor can plough 15 to 20 acres a day. If I don't have that much of land, what do I do with a tractor? So, I will have to go on with the plough. Is our small farmer going to be condemned forever to the use of the plough? Let us decide and say that the plough is going to be used for the next 100 years in this country. But, we don't do that. We do go in for 'tractorisation.' It is available to those who own large tracts of land. We talk of land reforms. Now, if people who want to keep their lands somehow, having them in the names of even their pets perhaps, why blame them. If we produce a tractor for a person with two or five acres, there will be no difficulty at all. We will be able to afford it and the banks will also help. The small farmer can't go and hire a tractor from the town to plough his two acre land. So, he goes on using the traditional implements. When I talk of the tractor, I refer in a way to the whole lot of implements and equipment, not tractor alone. We must look into the state of our economy, its scale and what kind of research and what kind of tools we want in this country.

Again, take solar energy. Every industrial exhibition tells you what has been done on solar energy. I have been seeing the same models or similar models for the last 15 years. If there is one area in which any amount of money can be put, I would say, that is the field of solar energy. Any research done in renewable alternative sources of energy will be a great boon for this country. We would thank those scientists on behalf of the coming generations, because they would be serving the cause of the future. If we exhaust our coal, exhaust our other sources, the coming generations will have almost nothing. It is here the scientist has to make a breakthrough. While we are making a lot of profits on airconditioners and other such equipment to save ourselves from the heat, for a change why can't we use this heat energy for something that is good. I think that is one area where massive investments could be made, provided there is a breakthrough. Let us have a breakthrough. I assure you we can cut expenditure elsewhere and allocate adequately for this in the Eighth Plan. I would even say that this is a deal I offer to the scientists.

In my village there is a small tank—*ayacut* is just about 200/250 acres. If there is an excess of rain, the tank overflows for three to four months. The seepage is so much that within two or three months, the tank becomes half empty. So, for four months, we have excess water and we don't know what to do with it. For

the next eight months, we have no water. Don't say that we have to construct a dam, another Nagarjuna Sagar, by the side of my village. We can't afford it. We can't do it as there is no space there. Tell me what we could do to use this water when it is available in excess, and what are the crops we can raise with scanty water during at least five of the next eight months. I have been asking this question for over 25 years now. I haven't got the answer.

Now, what are the cropping patterns to be adopted. It would vary from village to village. The village next to mine has a different soil, all black cotton soil. If you give the same prescription to that village as you would give for mine then they will be ruined. So, science, technology and research have to be need-based and that need can vary from individual to individual, village to village, *taluka* to *taluka*. So, it is that kind of a micro-planning that is needed, micro-study that is needed, even for chalking out research in science and technology.

We recognise the big achievements in science, whatever that has been done. Hats off for that. I am one of the admirers. We will do everything to support whatever is being done. No question about that. But in this fiftieth year, I think I should give you a little home work for the next 50 years. Maybe, this breakthrough is necessary. It has to be Indian research suited to Indian conditions, taking into account the Indian problems, taking up Indian challenges and bringing about Indian solutions.

I thank you very much for having given me this opportunity. I have great pleasure in inaugurating the CSIR Golden Jubilee Celebrations.

Preserving Our Heritage

TODAY LOOKING BACK I find the whole day has been qualitatively different from the days that we passed in Delhi. It has been a day of concepts, it has been a day of contemplation, it has been a day of interaction discourse of meeting of minds. I would welcome any number of these days, but alas we have to return again to a day where realities stone us on the face and we have to deal with

Speech while inaugurating Discovery of India Exhibition at Nehru Centre, Bombay,
1 November 1991

the totally different situation. I am happy about today, I am grateful to those who made it possible for me. Once in a while it may be good to be granted a day like this. I am using administrative language when I say granted. Panditji has been uppermost in our thoughts today and perhaps for those who want to think about things apart from doing things. Mahatmaji was, of course, comes in the light as the great liberator. We have this trio—the great liberator Mahatma Gandhi, the great inspirer Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the great integrator Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. India has been singularly fortunate in having these three very different and yet very well integrated personalities and but for them we would not have been what we are today.

It is a great fortune of the nation to find the leadership at a time when it is needed. If a leader comes too late he becomes a misfit. If he comes too early he just pales into oblivion. Panditji was a combination of action and contemplation. They used to say that when Panditji was outside jail, literature was at a loss and when Panditji was in jail, politics was at a loss. He enriched both and he gave us a lasting legacy—legacy which will not simply end with the reading of its works, it will not simply end by doing what he did and what he wanted us to do which we have been doing in any way to the best of our capacity; it is something much more than that. Was Panditji just a disciple of Gandhiji? Was he just a follower of Gandhiji? No. He was neither just a disciple nor just a follower. He was a disciple but not just a disciple. He was a follower, not a mere follower. He was really and truly the interpreter of Gandhiji. We have this great tradition of interpretation, the *Bhashyakara*. He told us what Gandhiji meant. In fact he was telling us what he thought Gandhiji meant. He took the text from Gandhiji. He moulded it, he interpreted it so as to be in continuity with Gandhiji and still different from what he started with. What we need today is persons who can imbibe Nehru not just as spongers. We have many spongers in our society. Scholarly spongers, educated spongers, uneducated spongers, squeeze them and something comes out. No, that is not the thing we want. We want an interpreter, we want a *Bhashyakar* in him. When and how that need is going to be fulfilled I cannot say but a *Bhashyakar* of Nehru is the need of the hour not only for India but for the whole world. He gave us ideas which had an element of futurism in them. He wanted some socialism, a home grown socialism. It is absolutely Indian. It emanates from the Indian genius. So what people understood by socialism when he defined socialism was totally different. His book *The Discovery of India* has to be read again and again. It is not easy to absorb it, it is not easy to assimilate it. I must have read it at least half a dozen times so far: I still feel

that there are portions which I should read again. He was prophetic actually without being called a prophet. What he wrote, what he said in his speeches has come true in many ways. People did not understand him, people some times ridiculed him saying that he oscillated between Moscow and Banaras. That was a snide remark, a comment, which I still remember. It was very much commented upon those days. I was a student at that time but his philosophy, his outlook was described in these terms as a person hanging between or oscillating between Moscow and Banaras. In fact he was neither on the Moscow side nor on the Banaras. He was intensely Indian but at the same time he belonged to an India which was not just an isolated India. It was a part of the world, it was a part of a greater entity. Nehru wanted India to have its own place not necessarily a dominant place but its own appropriate place and when he discovered India when he told us about the discovery of India he said without saying so that India's place in the world has to be at the top and not somewhere at the bottom. Read this book and you will know where India's place should be. He did not say in so many words and that is how he inspired generations. Of course if there is a generation where reading *The Discovery of India* is supposed to be a waste of time, naturally he could not inspire that generation or that person in the generation. Now Mr. Sharad Pawar has given us an aid which makes even reading unnecessary. We become more and more illiterate these days because of the electronic media. Now we have lost our patience to read books. You would like to read notes. I remember in our Law college every subject, Indian Contract Act, jurisprudence, you name it, it was condensed into 10 pages. I do not know how those who passed by reading these books are faring as lawyers today. In those days I did the folly of reading the real book and commentary. Almost everyone in the class laughed at me saying that I was really wasting my time. So the reading habit is fading. We are becoming more and more visual. So the electronic media and the gazettes in an exhibition show us what a book contains but they are very inadequate presentations. Whatever you might be, you get the best electronics man in the world in the universe, you will not really be able to translate *The Discovery of India*. But then it is better than nothing. At least it will whet the imagination, the curiosity so much so that perhaps ten per cent, five per cent or two per cent of the people coming here may feel like reading this book. Sometimes it happens, so this is the great utility of this exhibition.

I know about this centre for a long time. I visited it in 1976. Then it was not as it is, as complete as it is. It was at rudimentary stage but still the sweep of the imagination was there. The Nehru's vision was so wide and now it has come before us in its, what

they called, a tangible fashion. I am happy that these activities are being conducted here. I have great pleasure in inaugurating Discovery of India Exhibition. I am sure it will be of great help to those who would like to know about their own country. In this country museums are a rarity. In western countries you find there is a veritable competition on holding exhibitions and museums. It is a very healthy competition, very intense competition. In this country museology has not developed. We have tried to introduce it in the new education policy as one of the things to be fostered, to be encouraged. But we do not have as many museums as we want and as good as we want. The display itself is an art. Museology is an art. It is just not a collection of things unconnected. It means how you present the museum in the minimum space that is available. That is the essence of the Museology and the art of Museology. So this has been very well done here. Instead of having museums here we are losing all our artefacts, beautiful idols and beautiful statues. They are leaving the country. Smugglers are doing this to this country. If we could stop this, this is our minimum duty to this country. We have to develop Museology as a subject in schools and colleges and we have to have more and more museums. If this great heritage of ours is not to be pilfered away.

Science & Technology Should Improve Quality of Life

I AM DELIGHTED to participate in this seventy-ninth Session of the Indian Science Congress. This Congress boasts of a rich tradition dating back to the early years of the twentieth century. The Congress was a product of the cultural movement that emerged during the Independence Movement. Its stupendous growth is a manifestation of the unceasing urge of the Indian psyche to be involved in science and to promote it. The rich and close association of Panditji with the Congress has largely contributed to making its annual sessions the most important and largest Science and Technology event in the country year after year.

Address to the seventy-ninth session of the Indian Science Congress Association, Vadodara, 3 January 1992

Since Independence the country's development plans have placed enormous faith in the Indian Scientists and Technologists. And, in a large measure, they have come up to our aspirations. Over the last three decades, India has had an impressive real growth rate in national income of 3.5 per cent with a growth rate of 2.3 per cent in agriculture, and of 5 to 6 per cent in industry. Foodgrains production, which hovered around 50 million tonnes in the early fifties has now crossed the figure of 170 million tonnes. At the time of Independence, we had only a very small industry, restricted to textiles and certain extractive sectors. Today, most of the things we need are made in the country, though not all in adequate quantities. We have emerged as one of the major industrial nations in the world. In the last forty years, the death rate has been brought down from over 27 per thousand to 12.5. During this period, life expectancy has gone up from 32 years to 56.5 years. These achievements are clearly of the country as a whole and have involved research and development, the opening up of new innovative approaches, extension work, and the application of existing knowledge.

We have also had considerable success in the creation of a scientific and technological infrastructure covering a very broad spectrum of disciplines and capabilities. The growth of scientific activities in the fields of Atomic Energy and Space reflects the approach of self-reliance and indigenous development that has progressively permeated other scientific and technological fields. Industrial research has been enlarged through the setting up and expansion of a chain of laboratories. Thus, the post-Independence era has demonstrated the capability of the scientific community to convert the potential of a given area of research into a full-fledged programme for national development.

There has been greater emphasis on undertaking research activities relevant to national needs in food production and health care system for the society. Introduction of high yielding varieties and propagation of agricultural extension programmes has been a major factor in the successful growth of our agricultural production in the country. In the field of medical research, eradication of smallpox, reduction of infant mortality rates, and reduction in the incidence of dreaded diseases like cholera, and diarrhoea, have greatly contributed to improvements in the quality of life.

And yet, in spite of these significant advances, is it not true that the gap between India and the advanced countries has widened due to a much faster rate of growth in those countries? Rapid strides are being made in areas like micro-electronics and biotechnology and it will prove very difficult for us to catch up unless

we take extraordinary steps. To my mind, the basic structural weakness is that the required integration between the science and technology infrastructure and its capabilities on the one hand, and the production system on the other, just does not exist. This has led to an inadequate appreciation by industry of the capabilities in the Universities, national laboratories, and scientific agencies, and, therefore, their insufficient use.

There is also a growing feeling among some sections that our scientific establishments have become somewhat bureaucratic and are not providing an entirely conducive environment for innovation and creativity. We may not have readymade solutions to these problems but there has to be some fundamental re-thinking in the way we approach Science and Technology issues as a nation. I would like to share some thoughts on what I feel we should attempt to do, but let me first dwell a bit more directly on the focal theme of this year's Congress.

One major area of concern in the implementation of our development Plans has been our failure to bring down the birth rate significantly which has led to high population growth. This is one of the foremost pressing problems facing the country today and I commend the organisers for focusing attention on this issue. This reflects the growing concern and desire of our scientific community to contribute in tackling this problem without which it is not possible to have any meaningful socio-economic development of the country. We are today faced with a relentless 2 per cent population growth rate per annum, and at this rate, we would be a country of 100 crore people by the turn of this century and, worse, the population may double to 170 crores by 2024 A.D. These are really frightening figures. Such growth would undermine all our efforts to bring about rapid economic development and to improve the quality of life of our people. When we say we are adding one Australia every year, the statement seems to have become out of date already because the population of Australia is not increasing.

For effective limiting of population, it is imperative to adopt a holistic approach. Population control programmes need to be interlinked with the total development process. Socio-economic factors, such as women's literacy, age of marriage of girls, employment of women in the organised sector, and general economic development have a crucial bearing on the issue of population growth. Now, Dr. Gowarikar seems to have just quoted a book which has come recently, which seems to contradict all these hypotheses. But until the contradiction is confirmed we had better stick to what we already have been saying. The experience of other countries has shown that education and over-all economic

development are the two most critical factors which determine the size of the family. Population policies thus need to be integrated with our educational strategies and other developmental plans, especially at the grass root level.

Family planning efforts require a great deal of conscientisation and community mobilisation to shake off past prejudices, complacency and apathy. In recent times, the need and urgency for an effective population control programme has been expressed at several public platforms. At the recently convened National Development Council meeting also, State Chief Ministers voiced serious concern over this issue and promptly, as Chairman of the NDC, I promised to set up a sub-committee on population headed by one of the Chief Ministers so that they could tell us what they would do and also what the Government of India should do. This is how we are now getting the Chief Ministers into the deliberative part of our development. They were only recipients so far but I think they will have to say and do at the same time from now on.

Yet, the consciousness and concern about the problem which exists at the national level is somehow not getting translated into concern at the individual or family level. In a village, a poor man will say "What do I have to lose? I have more hands to earn. Why should I limit my progeny?" You just have no answer to that because he does not have any property. A propertied man may say his property would get fragmented and his sons, daughters etc. will get less and less if he has more and more of progeny. But for a person who has only a family, a poor family whose entire property consists of the hands of the members of the family he has nothing to lose and it is very difficult to convince him that he should take to family planning, unless you switch to the aspect of his wife's health or of his children's education. So, this is something a little remote from his understanding and you will have to switch the emphasis from one aspect to another. This takes time and this takes a lot of talking to him. And I am glad that where this has been done successfully the response has been marvellous. Whatever you tell him, tell him in his language, not in scientific language, he will understand, she will understand and you find that the results come perhaps sooner than you expect, perhaps better than you expect.

Family Planning is really a private affair. This I have been saying ever since I was Health Minister twenty years ago. Family planning is indeed a very private decision-making process, and awareness, active awareness, must be most effective at that level. This decision-making between couples has to be facilitated through a process of close, person to person contact programmes. This would

necessitate massive yet innovative, communication and population education efforts by the Government, as well as by all segments of society, particularly the voluntary organisations which I am sure are even better fitted to do this task. But they have to address themselves to this urgent problem and contribute significantly in mobilising public opinion in this regard.

In this context, I may also add that anyone who wants to communicate has to become a *guru* whatever his age, whatever his position. He has to become a *guru* and he has to be able to transmit it to the *shishya* and between the *guru* and the *shishya*, the relation is a very special one. The relation is condensed in those wonderful words *Pranipatenah*, *Pariprashnenah*, *Savyahi*. First you start with respect. The *shishya* makes obeisance to the *guru* but then he does not spare him, then *pariprashnenah* starts. He cross-examines him and it is then that the *guru* sometimes can get irritated. If he can go on explaining to the *shishya* who goes on questioning—much of our literature, ancient literature has been a compendium of questions and answers as you know—then he will be able to serve *savyahi*. If this chain is broken anywhere, then it never progresses and does not yield results. In this context, a major challenge before us, and specially before our scientific community, relates to research and development activities for population control programmes.

Global research on new contraceptives has unfortunately not kept pace with the emerging needs. We must take greater initiative in improving our research activities in this area. I am aware that our scientists can hold their own with the best in the world and are capable of delivering the goods. The discovery of non-steroidal weekly oral pill is a major breakthrough. But much more need to be done in this field—specially in anti-fertility vaccines, and other reversible contraceptive methods. Greater attention also needs to be paid to research in the Indian systems of Medicine, specially herbal medicines, which offer a great untapped potential for population control. As mother and child care has a crucial bearing on population growth, other key areas for scientific research are vaccines for vaccine preventable diseases. Research in these areas would contribute to our goal of reducing infant mortality, thereby creating conditions for fertility decline. The decade of the nineties would be decisive in determining whether we as a Nation are able to meet this challenge of explosive population growth. The scientific community must respond adequately to this challenge. We must harness our native genius and develop-“home grown” technologies acceptable to our people. I attach the greatest importance to this

aspect because ultimately what is acceptable to the people is that that works and nothing else.

To my mind, along with population control the central task is to develop the latent potential of our population to convert it into productive resource. It is the area of human resource development and growth that is the real challenge to the scientific community. I see in our population a potential waiting to be harnessed. A nation with a large population, that has educated, healthy, well trained and equipped people could become one of the strongest in the world. It is not beyond us. Science can provide us many answers. The point I would like to stress is that population is not necessarily to be looked upon as antithesis to national development or a hindrance to it. Our population is young. While labour productivity in certain front-end industries and hi-tech areas may demand more automation, there are several other innovative technologies that can absorb our huge young population in productive work creating more wealth for the country as a whole. This again is one of the challenges we will try to address in the Eighth Five Year Plan and the Eighth Five Year Plan takes this as one of the key areas in which a breakthrough is expected during the Plan apart from population.

One of the crucial elements in massive employment generation is development of skills. We require a massive on-the-job training in an innovative way. Now, our society, the Indian society, is a beautiful example of on-the-job training in every home. We have abandoned it for other reasons. The carpenter's son need not be a carpenter, he can be a Collector; but he can also be a coolie. Now that much mobility we have brought. But, what about the on-the-job training? What was available to the weaver's son, or the carpenter's son or the blacksmith's son right at home; he was spoiling things perhaps and getting a few slaps from his father in the process. But he was learning. We are not able to substitute that. Let us understand, let us face this reality. Abandoning it is good because you cannot really make the society static. But at the same time you have to impart to the society the dynamism without abandoning the virtue of a system which trains the child as he grows. That virtue you cannot abandon unless you substitute it with something else. Countries like Japan and Germany have apprentice training programmes involving a few millions annually. I have visited some of these institutions particularly in Germany. But in the final analysis what they are adopting today I think could be derived from what the Indian society had through the ages. Now, this may sound far-fetched, but it is not. You can see the link if you look for it a little more carefully.

We need to continually professionalise the skill levels of our people, who have consistently demonstrated that whenever they have been provided the opportunity, they are second to none. Training in the latest technological skills will open many avenues of self-employment and increased productivity in several sectors of our economy. Improvement in agricultural practices, adaptation of newer technology and skills in our traditional handloom, khadi and village industries, and further utilisation of the potential existing in hi-tech labour intensive industries like electronics, especially software development, provide large possibilities of absorbing our labour force.

There is a talk of high technologies. In some areas like atomic energy, space and defence research we have achieved excellent standards. We need to be able to make a breakthrough in other areas. The point I must stress is that we should choose areas where we can make the maximum impact, both nationally and internationally. But the choices have to be made carefully. We may import some technologies to build upon them. And we cannot afford repeated imports. This is important. We have now removed many fetters that impeded the growth of industries and foreign trade. In this process Indian industries are being exposed to increased domestic competition as well as competition from the outside world. The decisions regarding the choices of technology, the growth path, etc. are now primarily within the industries except in a few areas. Given the past trends, there are some worries whether the industries will go in for more and more import of technologies. Unless we learn to inject sustained, large inputs of home-grown technologies into the imported technologies and also generate massively our own technologies reflecting our own native genius and resource endowment, we will be left behind and we will be left constantly behind. At any point of time if you do not have innovation within the country, if you do not have research and development of your own, if you do not have technology of your own—it may not be 100 per cent your own but then something which has been improved upon and Indianised—unless you do that, at any given point of time you will be lagging behind in technology and you will be only imitating the others, importing from the others and still be second hand. This is what we will be condemned to if we do not have our own expansion of the R&D base within our own limitations, maybe to start with but if funds are needed, if attention is needed, if resources are needed, it is to this area that the resources have to be given first.

I have in mind, for example, the large scale use of rhizobium culture and blue green algae as partial substitutes for chemical

fertilizers. This is extremely important because in our area wherever chemical fertilizers have been used for the last 25 years. Go to any coastal area; perhaps go to Punjab, chemical fertilizers have started yielding diminishing returns and you have to put one and half a bag of Ammonium Sulphate when you had only one bag last year; I mean it is going up and the humus of the soil is getting completely destroyed; water-logging is taking place, soil texture is getting very badly deteriorated and all kinds of things are happening. I could cite any number of consequences of the excessive use of chemical fertilizers—you are really killing the soil. We cannot afford to kill the soil in this country. China and India have maintained their agricultural production for 5,000 years without allowing it to deteriorate because we have farmed the soil, we have not mined the soil. We have started mining the soil in agriculture when we started with chemical fertilizers. Now I am the Minister for Chemical Fertilizers, so I should not run down the fertilizers too much. But I must say that these fertilizers have to be supplemented at the earliest—supplemented, not necessarily eliminated. The compulsions of the Green Revolution brought chemical fertilizers to the fore. And they came in excessively because we wanted quick results. Now we have stabilised, atleast in food production, so we will have to think of other methods. As a farmer I think this is common sense. The common sense is not so easy when it comes to thinking in the Governmental echelons. So we have to take recourse to some farmers. I hope Balramji will knock some sense into this whole situation.

I would like to pose this issue a bit differently. We have to address the issue of increased technology generation in industry in the context of the global competition and our foreign exchange constraints. It is not enough to target to wipe out trade imbalances which is important in itself. Our problems with the balance of payments will vanish only when we become a net exporter of technologies. And this is what I would like to pose as the challenge before the Indian scientific community. Can we as a nation set ourselves the target of becoming a net exporter of technologies by the twenty-first century? Now, we have to become because we have fixed responsibilities among the developing nations already. In the G-15 meeting, for instance, which we had in Caracas recently, India has taken upon itself the task of developing solar energy. Now, solar energy happens to be something like a poor relation in the Ministry of Power in the Government of India: I don't know what the position is in the States, maybe worse. Now, I have to lift that poor relation to the place of centrality in the scheme of things. I promised myself that I will do it in the Eighth Plan. And

this is what I would like to pose as the challenge before the Indian scientific community.

I would like a plan of action drawn up and some active steps taken jointly by industry and the scientific institutions on technology generation very soon and particularly on these two areas which we have taken—solar energy and Gene Banks. In fact, I would never be able to do anything without the full co-operation and involvement of the scientific community. So, I have taken up a challenge there only with the intention of passing it on to you. I don't propose to do anything myself but I will only be the conduit and this challenge is before you. In the next two or three years if you do not have a breakthrough then India will lose her position among the developing countries, leave alone the developed. So, I think we have a very high stake, in developing technology in India.

In the context of providing productive employment to our large numbers we must keep in view the hard fact that most of our people will continue to be in rural areas and live on agriculture. How to improve their productivity should be the concern of the newer technological research. Our investments in R&D in improving crop yields have still a long way to go. Pulses, oil-seeds, paddy and sugarcane are obvious areas for more intensive research. In fact, the scope of agricultural research should go beyond land resource management to preservation, packaging, and transportation of produce. Wherever you go you find our fruit growers are crying. They say they don't get an adequate price. By the time the season ends, the production also comes to a close, everything is exhausted, they end up in the lowest possible prices and they remain poor because the cost of cultivation, cost of fruitgrowing is going up. Now this is a peculiar situation where we have done something but did not supplement what else needs to be done in the wake of that "something". This is a continuous battle the farmer is waging in this country and we have to be continuously helping him. Tax him if necessary but don't leave him half way. No farmer is averse to paying five rupees more for something which he needs; but if he doesn't get it in time then he is the most miserable person. There is a saying in my language that when you are sowing the seed there is a difference in productivity in the yield between the seed that is in your hand and the seed that has already fallen in the soil. I mean, it is so urgent you cannot really measure anything matching this kind of urgency. The season is an urgent thing for the farmer which very few people seem to realise. Our forefathers realised it. So much of literature has been created, written, if you don't have rains in Mrigashira then your yield goes down by half. This is what everybody believes in my area. And we calculate the yields by whether I had the first showers between the first and the

seventh of June or the first and the seventh of July. If it is during the first and the seventh of July, all my *Kharif* operations are delayed by one month which means the yields have gone down by 40 to 50 per cent. So these scientific truths are known.

India's great yield from land is one of the highest in the world. I was once upon a time a grape grower and I am telling you this from personal experience. But much of it cannot reach export markets because we cannot process, package, preserve and transport it. You only have to come to Hyderabad in the season of *Anabshahi*. You will know piles and piles almost mountains of *Anabshahi*, beautiful grapes but within one month you don't get anything, everything is exhausted because it is sold that cheap.

A major difficulty is that the present day technologies and processing techniques are biased in favour of centralised and usually urban processing of produce from the rural areas. This has led to economic imbalances. We must consciously and deliberately develop innovative and cost effective techniques and technologies for storage, processing and value addition in the decentralised rural sector, for example in storage and processing of fruits, vegetables that I was just talking to you about.

I have so far talked about the role of Science and Technology in fostering economic growth of the country. While this is a vital necessity, there is also another—and equally important contribution—that I expect from the scientific community. This is its contribution in improving the quality of life of our people. Of course, we started with the most important aspect of population limitation. We must, to take a simple example, ensure a more healthy population. Now, some of the methods we have adopted have again started yielding diminishing returns. Your DDT spraying, for instance, I don't know what happens to our mosquitoes; they seem to be thriving on DDT. Every Municipal Chairman will be able to tell you this. Now there is something to be done, which is much more innovative, much more original, than this. Go to Kerala or Pondicherry. They have not used a drop of DDT and still controlled Malaria, eliminated mosquitoes only by environmental sanitation. It should be a show-piece for the whole world but no one knows about it. It was just the common sense of the villagers. They were told a few things and they said if they could eliminate mosquitoes, if they could stop the breeding of the mosquito, they would do it and they did it. I don't see why it cannot be done anywhere else. But it is not done because we believe in certain things which, maybe, we have learnt from books or we are too lazy to attempt new things and that is where innovation which has

been the basis of the Indian society for thousands of years has to be revived.

Clearly, we have to re-define “development”. Its meaning in India should be rather different from what perhaps it implies in Western understanding. Gandhiji once said that if the British—to sustain their life style—needed such a vast empire, how many worlds would India need if we adopted the lifestyle of the British. Just multiply and see that it is just impossible; you just cannot imitate the western society in its lifestyle. It is the basic truth each one of us has to understand including the scientific community. The consumption-oriented model of the purely market-led economics today poses a major challenge to the survival of mankind, leave alone India. The problems of global-warming and of ozone depletion have been caused, in large part—this is all what the scientists have told us—by the profligacy of consumption that places acquisitiveness and individual gratification above societal good and collective needs. Neither in terms of natural resources, nor human values is such a development model desirable. Even the advanced countries are now realising this. But they do not quite know what to do. So, they take the easiest course; they seem to be devising methods to limit the development of developing countries in the name of preserving the environment. They say we have done enough damage, now, you don’t do and stop your development. That is the advice that we get from the developed countries. Now, we have to say, “Sorry, how can we stop our development, how can we atone for the sins committed by you?” It is that simple. But then we cannot imitate their methods by which they have ruined the environment. So, we have to have a new technology. We have to have a technology which is more relevant to our needs and our genius. Now, this is where the whole lifestyle, the philosophy of developing countries have to be different from the philosophy of those who have already developed—developed, because they could by force of arms, by empires and things like that. We cannot do the same and therefore, the entire philosophy of life of the developing countries has to be different. This, of course, is not acceptable that we should stop our development. Yet, the fact remains that developing countries have to invent a new model, more suited to their needs, their culture and their values, one which recognises what Gandhiji said: “The world has enough for everyman’s need, but not for everyman’s greed.”

Before concluding, Madam Chancellor, I would like to make an offer to the scientific community, not just the scientific community but everyone of us. And, I have a concrete offer or a suggestion to scientists, to Chief Ministers of all the States of India, to

representatives of the people everywhere in India, to the administrators from the Cabinet Secretary down to the last village level worker or *Anganwadi* worker, to all of us; let us go and sit in a village; let me see what the scientific community has to show me in that village in which they can claim their contribution. I would beg of the Chief Ministers to start this, go and sit in a village, I am prepared to come, let us have the inauguration done by me and all of you; in fact, I was telling Chimanbhai just now while we were driving here; there are so many good things for Chief Ministers to see in States that are not their own. The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister has to come to Gujarat; the Gujarat Chief Minister has to go to Uttar Pradesh. Now, maybe you will be able to learn some positive things and some negative things also. You will also learn what not to do. It is a great experience.

If you go to the real beneficiary which is the village, we always talk in terms of the village and villagers, we all know what we have given to the village. When I enter my village and see the old bullock cart which I knew from my childhood, maybe from my grandfather's childhood, the same bullock cart, with no innovation in the bullock cart, what do I feel? I feel that it is an example of stagnation. Now, I would like to ask the scientific community. This question I have been posing for decades now. What have you done for the bullocks of India? If you cannot reduce the burden on the bullock, what happens to the life of the bullocks—the productivity of the bullock? If you load too much and the cart is so bad and the lanes in the village and the fields are bad what happens? Therefore, the innovation has to start from a bullock cart. Gandhiji accepted this. The old *Takli* when compared to the 8-Spindle Charkha of today, there is an enormous improvement, technological improvement, innovation, everything. It is almost a mill. But it is not a mill in the sense that it does not displace too many people; it increases daily wages, earnings and this is the kind of technology that we have to try to develop. It should not be labour saving in the sense that you get everybody out into the street, throw them out of their jobs and at the same time it cannot be the drudgery of yesterday continuing for all times. So, this is the balance that we have to maintain. Let us really start from the typical Indian village and see how much Indian science has given to that village.

I would like to make, particularly in the context of the family planning programme, the *Anganwadi* worker as the nucleus of the programme, as the primary inspirer of the programme. I know that the community development programme flourished because of the Village Level Worker, the *Gram Sewak*. Credit might have been

taken by many others but ultimately a village which had a good Village Level Worker had a good programme of community development and if he was lousy the programme was lousy. So, in this programme the *Anganwadi* worker who looks after children, who looks after babies, looks after mothers, should also look after family planning. I am told that their working conditions are none too good; we will have to look into them but at the same time the whole process being an integrated process we will have to have a worker of that type looking after the whole process. We would like to see if this can be woven into the Eighth Five Year Plan because this is how in this holistic manner we have to go ahead and try to solve our problems. I am making this suggestion in all earnestness because until you apply this to the village where it has to be applied, you will never know where you stand.

Now, to conclude, in our effort to evolve a new model of development, one that combines growth, including balanced population growth with equity and social justice, I look up to you, scientists and technologists, to play a major role. After all, technology is not concerned only with more efficient exploitation of resources. It is and should be equally concerned with sustainability, with evolving technologies and processes of recycling, and with developing technologies of special relevances to the disadvantaged and the poor.

Go to any village, a housewife will show you what is recycling. If the saree gets torn, she will make two or three pieces out of it, use each piece for something else. This kind of thrift, this kind of economy, this kind of sensible approach to problems, if only the nation could adopt this, could imbibe this, we will have nothing to bother. There is so much of individual wisdom available here. India is a place, is a country where individual brilliance combines with collective pragmatism. If this combination is available then the country will never falter anywhere.

I am very happy to be with you today. I am sorry I may have taken a little more time but I thought it is necessary to talk to the scientific community in the language of an unscientific politician.

Cultivate Scientific Temper

I AM INDEED very happy to be here to be associated with this function. I have watched the progress of this programme from year to year, from place to place and I had occasion to visit museums at different levels. I remember I inaugurated one of your District Science Centres in the far south in Thirunalvelly.

I have some idea of how this has been conceptualised because in the first place when Rajivji visited Bombay for that huge centre, perhaps to inaugurate it or to visit, I was with him and I could see from exhibit to exhibit how the nature of this museum is a little different than the museums we generally find in other places on other subjects. This interactive nature of this museum is a speciality and that is why sometimes I wondered whether you should at all call it a museum. It is more a centre, centre which disseminates certain urge, certain knowledge, certain inspiration. Museum is a thing which gives you knowledge. If you want to know what was happening 5,000 years ago, go to a museum. But if you want to know how to interact with the outside world, you go to something which is not exactly a museum, it is something more, it is museum plus. Maybe I am doing some hairsplitting or language acrobatics but it is true and you have to call the thing by the right name, otherwise anyone without seeing it could get a wrong idea or an idea which is not exactly accurate.

I have been thinking of naming this and I couldn't find a better name to be attached with this institution than Rajiv Gandhi's. I would like to announce this on this occasion because I couldn't think of a more appropriate occasion. Let us name it after Rajiv Gandhi. We all had the privilege of working with him and particularly on the inspiration which he gave in the field of science and to those workers working in the field of science. I had some very close knowledge of this and I think we will be doing the right thing by naming this after him.

The interaction which we all talk about is very important. Today, somehow there is a feeling that we are the pioneers in the field of science in this country. The fact of the matter is that we are not. We are only inheritors rather than pioneers. We have not pioneered anything which was not there in some form or the other. Therefore, it is partly a question of knowing ourselves and

partly the adaptability, the capacity to adapt what we already know to the circumstances of today and the circumstances of tomorrow. Now, there is an element of imagination in this, there is an element of speculation also in this, there is an element of realism in this because if that is missing then nothing will happen.

So, what we have to do today is a rather difficult exercise where we have to first understand thoroughly what is available in this country because that is important from the point of view of bringing into action, bringing into focus the genius of the country. If our forefathers, a thousand years or two thousands years ago, made some discovery or made some invention in a particular manner, today we don't have to discard it as unnecessary until you find it unnecessary; otherwise, maybe that was more in keeping with the Indian genius than anything else, we may borrow from outside. I am not against borrowing. We have lent many things to other countries, so there is nothing wrong in some things being borrowed from other countries. Science or human knowledge has always been international. Through times immemorial there have been no national barrier in knowledge. I am not against that. But the point is something which was done by a great great grandfather of ours was done in conditions in which more or less we are living today in India. So, conditions being the same, the thinking also could be the same until after going into it you find that the conditions have changed to such an extent that that particular thinking is no longer relevant. That is acceptable. But to discard it outright is not acceptable. To copy it blindly is again not acceptable. This is the essence of the scientific temper or the scientific approach that we have to adopt today.

I would like friends to know that there is science in the lives of our people every minute. There is science in the beliefs of our people. They don't know that there is science in it. We also do not know until we go a little under the surface and discover it. That process is very important. So, we have to know ourselves. We have to understand the science and the scientific temper which existed in our society from times immemorial and apply it to modern conditions. These are the three or four steps which I would suggest are relevant today.

So, I would say from Jawaharlal Nehru who gave perhaps the first modern interpretation of science in the Indian society, how it existed, how it blossomed forth, and this perhaps was not so much for Indian audiences but for foreigners. People who read his *Discovery of India* and other writings, discover India more than he did and perhaps the name itself was meant for readers who are not

born in this culture. It is something new to them and something quite an eye-opener.

I went to inaugurate some of the science exhibitions in connection with the Festival of India. I could see the wonder, I could see the disbelief, on the faces of foreign audiences when these things were shown there. They just could not believe that such a thing could have existed and that too in India. So, for them it is a discovery. And in that Discovery, Jawaharlal Nehru has given such a succinct account of what was obtained in India and also in his other writings, in his speeches to the Indian Science Congress from time to time, I mean it is a beautiful exploration of science, the scientific mind, the scientific temper, the scientific approach and the scientific future of this country. I could not recommend anything more than what he wrote on science and technology to our children, our young people of today.

Now even after 25 years, that is one generation, are we just dittoing what Panditji said? I think the same methodology should apply to us today. You should know what Panditji said. You should be able to apply what Panditji said 30 or 40 years ago but we should also be able to find out in what respect what Panditji said may not hold good in today's conditions. That is again the scientific approach. You must have the boldness to say so. If somebody says "Oh! are you saying something to the effect that what Panditji said 30 years ago has become irrelevant, that is blasphemy," then you slink again into the area of superstition. One has to be very clear about it.

Today we have a particular philosophy. In other countries, I am trying to explain this as often as possible. We have a kind of science and technology which is based on the exploitation of the earth's natural resources, exhaustible resources, finite resources, limited resources. Within 150 years or 200 years, these resources would have been depleted to such an extent that you would have this alarming prospect of this globe, this planet running out of everything. If our forefathers 5,000 years ago or the great thinkers everywhere in the world could think far into the future, today I think we will not be their worthy successors if we also cannot think far into the future and say "After me the deluge, why should I bother what is going to happen after 200 years, let me overexploit and be happy so long as I am alive." If this is the shortsighted nature of your own comprehension, then I am afraid we will be harbingers of the extinction of the human race. There is absolutely no doubt about that.

So, today the entire aspect of technology has to change and this revolution was again initiated by Indira Gandhi when she spoke of

environment. Probably she was not in a position to spell out all this but the first person to ring the danger bell was Indira Gandhi, at Nairobi about eight or nine years ago. During these nine years, mankind has realised to a much larger extent, much deeper extent, what environment means, what environmental degradation means. Today while we are discussing this subject, the political aspects of the subject, we are able to find out what it means to a developing country, what it means to a developed country and how these two points of view do not mix, how it has fallen to the lot of the leaders of today to find a common approach to environment which is acceptable to both, developed and the developing countries. It has not emerged so far. I am not sure whether it will emerge in Brazil where we are going to have this UN Conference on Environment. But this is going to be one of the toughest jobs, perhaps as tough as disarmament, as tough as the complete dismantling of all the weapons, the nuclear weapons. But we are progressing. What was written 25 years ago or 30 years ago is absolutely valid but its application has to change. What we are thinking of today will again remain valid but after ten years its application will change, will have to change. And this is the crux of science, the scientific temper if you ask me. All other things are details, but this is the crux.

So, I would like to say that anyone who visits these centres should be able to apply his own original thinking to what he sees and perhaps think in terms of what would happen in his village, what would happen in his house if he did this or that. That kind of thinking should be set in motion and that is what should be the idea of going to these museums, to whet ones curiosity which is there in plenty. Why do we say "Don't touch anything which you find on the road, which looks peculiar to you, it may be a bomb?" That is how those who plant bombs make use of the curiosity inherent in man. A child goes along the road, now he finds something very peculiar, it could not be a cigarette box, it could not be a radio. Even if there is a radio, he says "Oh, there is a radio on the roadside, let me see what it is." And the moment he operates it, he is blown up. So, this is curiosity. Sometimes of course it leads to danger but curiosity is inherent in man. And if you cannot whet the curiosity by showing these things in a museum, then the entire purpose is lost.

I am happy that we are meeting today on a very important occasion when we are more or less at the crossroads. Of course, this again is a cliché because man is always on the crossroads. I don't know when he is going to take any road at all. Everytime we meet, we are told that we are at the crossroads, so we are permanent residents of the crossroads. But in a way yes, in a way

so many options are opening up to you and they are new options, they are not the options of yesterday, the options of today and if you take the wrong option you will end up in the wrong place and that is the kind of thing life has become—very complicated but at the same time very challenging.

I am happy that we are able to chart out this course in modern India. Today we are able to see when we talk of poverty, it is not just my lecturing that I want to take poverty out, I want to drive poverty out, it is not a stone or a boulder on the road that I could just push it out. It is woven into the lives of the people, in the minds of the people, in the thinking of the people. It is so deep. You have to go that deep in order to remove poverty. We have seen most of our programmes flounder against this rock of incomprehension. We want to do something very sincerely. In all earnestness, we start doing it. It does not work because we have not thought through before embarking on it. So, a lot of planning today has to be based on human behaviour, on what you think will be the acceptability of what you are doing and this means a lot of imagination, a lot of experience of the field, a lot of insight into the thinking of those who are going to be your beneficiaries. Planning has become a complex affair today. If you really wanted to succeed you will have to think a little more succinctly about it, go a little deeper into what you are trying to do and what it is likely to get as its result. But that is a different subject.

Wherever I go I find that the task before us is not only huge but also complex. There was a time when we thought that our tasks are only huge and it is a fact, I mean comparing with any small country. If it is possible to solve the problems of that small country by a dose of assistance, say from abroad, that can be done. Many countries have got that kind of dose and got transformed. You cannot do that to India. It is an elephant. The elephant has to stand on its own legs. The moment it collapses, no one can make it stand and it cannot stand on any other elephant's legs. You can't bring another elephant; even another elephant will not be able to raise it. So, for a country of India's size, China's size, there is no other alternative but to be self-reliant in standing on its own legs. This weight its own legs can carry and nothing else.

At the same time the complexity of the situation is such that the demands in this society have become complex—competing claims, competing demands. What we look at it in the city becomes totally irrelevant. When I was Health Minister, I introduced just those small scripts, where they talk of malnutrition or malaria or other problems at prime time on TV as they call it. Now, many people

have told me, "We don't want to look at this, we don't want to watch this when we are at the dining table." They wouldn't mind if this is shown after everybody has slept. Now what do I do? The intolerance of it that we cannot see a scene of poverty or malnutrition in the form of an emaciated child on the television screen when we are at the dining table, you could be living in two different planets, not even different countries. So I must have a channel for the poor, I must have a channel for the rich, I must have a channel for the middle class. Now, what have we come to? I am just citing one example among numerous examples which I could cite, where life has become so compartmentalised and mutually seemingly antagonistic. I have to find the common thread, Arjun Singhji has to find the common thread as Education Minister. It is not going to be easy. It is a very difficult task. It is a very complex task.

But with the scientists, with the thinkers, with the intellectuals, with us, I am quite sure we will be able to find a way even out of this very complex task.

Tapping Non-Conventional Energy Sources

I AM VERY happy to be associated with this conference. This is something we have been very particular about, very keen about and it is time that this programme gets a shot in the arm, particularly because we are going to launch the Eighth Five Year Plan. I am not aware of what allocations have been made in the plan, I shall ascertain those figures, that is not difficult. But what I would like to tell you is what has been brought about as one of the recommendations.

The time has come when a separate dispensation needs to be given to this programme. The non-conventional and the conventional, renewable and the non-renewable, these are distinct and I think they should be recognised as distinct. One of the programmes cannot remain as a poor relation of another programme for any length of time. I propose to take some steps in this direction

in the Central Government and I would like to recommend the same to all the State Governments. The best possible solution to whatever hurdles are coming in the way of this programme is to hold someone exclusively responsible for the programme, someone at the political level so that there will be no confusion and the programme can go ahead with full speed—whether it is a matter of allocation, whether it is a matter of research, this programme needs to stand alone, needs to stand separately as a programme by itself and only then I think results will be better.

The other very important aspect particularly relevant to the developing countries is that we are really aping countries whose conditions are totally different from ours in the models that we have taken for power generation. There are many countries, very rich in oil, they can use oil for everything, they don't have to go for any other source at all. They can continue to use the oil and maybe the next hundred years or two hundred years they will not need any other source. There are countries with a very advanced output of nuclear power. They can go ahead with replicating those units, maybe, with better technology, safer technology; it is only a question of upgradation so far as they are concerned—countries like France for instance. There are countries where money is available and power has been generated to such an extent already that there is really no need for them to bother about power, the availability of power for the next ten or fifteen years, as the case may be. There are countries like Zambia, Zimbabwe and all the countries around the Victoria Falls for which Victoria Falls alone can supply all the power needed, maybe, till eternity. Many of you might not have seen the Victoria Falls but those who have seen, either Niagara or the Victoria Falls, will agree that that is a single source which can feed almost the whole of Africa for all time to come. It is only a question of developing the technology for it and using it.

Now where does India stand? We have something of everything and this something of everything makes things very difficult for us. But very strangely the source that is available for all time and in abundance is the least cared for at the moment and that is sunlight. Now, if there is to be one common, massive programme over the next, say, four or five decades in the entire developing world, which is called the South, by definition it is South and it is abundant in sunshine. All these countries of South are still grappling with problems of infrastructure, not having adequate resources, almost begging for resources from other countries and losing their national sovereignty in the process. What do they do without power, without energy? Now, there is a source available right overhead; raise your head you will know the source, you will see the source

but you are not able to tap it. Then we go and tie ourselves into knots saying which is more economical, which is less economical how much per kilowatt etc. All that is valid but the other sources of energy are not easily available. You don't have necessary foreign exchange; you have to earn your foreign exchange, every dollar, every pound. When we cannot afford, we have to use what is available to us and that is the challenge to every developing country.

I will give you an example. In some areas, say in the delta areas, where every inch of land is cultivated you will not find enough fuel wood. People have to trudge long distances, to get fuel wood. Wherever there is a forest, there is an upland area about thirty miles or forty miles. You find women, men carrying those headloads to the town or to the big village where it is not possible to have their own stand alone sources of fuel wood. No one will allow any common land to remain even for grazing and you find this problem very acute in those villages.

Contrasted with that, take a tribal village, everything is plentiful there. You have to just step out of the hut and collect a few twigs from the forest and your food can be cooked for the day, there is no problem. So, we have such contradictory pictures, contrasting pictures in this country. Therefore the needs of the people have to be properly evaluated.

So, in some areas you have fuel in plenty and in some other areas no fuel at all, no fuel wood at all. The strategy for these two areas cannot be the same. It is quite evident. In the same manner the strategy for power generation, energy generation in developing countries has to be essentially different from that of the developed countries. I do not know why this simple fact, basic fact is not realized and we go about making calculations on the basis of what has been done in the Western countries. Yes, we have coal but what sort of coal? We have the most inferior kind of coal which will suffice for the next two or three hundred years I am told. The best variety of coal is very limited and you cannot be frittering away that coal and becoming completely devoid of coal in the next fifty or sixty years. This is a very large country and whatever you do here it is the magnitude of the problem that baffles you all the time. It is not just having a little every year and going on for two hundred years. Before you know what is happening you will run out of all these things in the next fifty or forty years.

We thought that we would have oil, our oil production would be about 60 to 70 per cent in the next ten years. That is what we thought in 1980 when Indiraji became Prime Minister the second time, she started a massive programme of oil drilling and oil production. Now where do we find ourselves today? We are able

to meet only 35 per cent of our needs and it may become even less because the needs are increasing at a more rapid pace than our generation, than our oil prospecting or production. Therefore, the more you do there is much more to be done. This is the position of a country like India with growing population.

There is really no way of telling how much the population of India is going to be at the end of the century. We may have different extrapolations, estimates etc., but is there anyone who can say that India's population will not be beyond this particular figure at the end of the century. You give me that and I will give you a twenty year plan which will be valid for all times in India. But it won't be because you do not know how many consumers are going to be born. So, how much production you would have to need. Even in foodgrains today we say we are self-sufficient in foodgrains; agreed, but are we going to be self-sufficient at the end of the century, are we going to continue to be self-sufficient when our population is not 85 crores as it is today but 150 crores or 140 crores which is the figure being given by our population experts. How much area can we bring under cultivation, how much intensification of the agricultural programmes we can do taking today's fertility and yield as the base. And then what are our levels of consumption, what are our levels of nutrition? At the present level, we are self-sufficient. Can we give 3000 calories or 2800 calories to every individual and still say that we are self-sufficient in food? I don't think so.

So, these are the imponderables against which we have to battle and how can we do it if we start with a resource which is going to be depleted year after year, hour after hour. We will have to fall back on a source which is inexhaustible. For India this is going to be absolutely essential, for China this is going to be absolutely essential, there is no other way. Therefore, solar energy, wind energy, whatever other kinds of energy are available here, would have to be completely made use of whatever the cost, whatever the difficulty, whatever the hurdles; this is the only way of creating self-sufficient ways of life in this country. Otherwise we will lose our sovereignty.

If people want to come and start industries here, the first question they will ask, "Have you got energy to give us? Have you got power to give us and at what rate, what tariff?" If we are not able to answer that one question satisfactorily, out they go. So, where are we really? Within the last seven months or eight months we have done some reforms in the economic policy. Reforms in the economic policy in a small country are totally different from a country of India's size. Here reforms in economic policy mean so

much of infrastructure being made available, almost overnight. Your telephones don't work properly, you do not have the network. Your electricity goes off, the farmers are left high and dry and they have to tap it sometimes in midnight, otherwise their electric pumps get burnt out and in fact, they don't get it at all. There are occasions particularly in summer or before summer when irrigation water is needed most but they don't get it. The yield is affected. But in Government records it is said so much acreage has been cultivated, therefore so much production has been achieved. It won't be achieved. If you don't give water in time, particularly in a paddy field if you don't give two or three wettings, for two three days for there is no electricity, then it is gone, it is zero. Now, this is the kind of risk we are running by depending on undependable sources of energy. The most dependable source of energy is what is abundantly available. The question is one of technology, making it cost-efficient and that is where we will have to put all our money, energy, and our attention. I have no doubt that this is going to be the programme of tomorrow so far as India is concerned. Of course, we will continue our power generation, all the other sources will be tapped, but this has to be given a special dispensation and I am quite clear in my mind that this has to be done.

You will have to go into each of these aspects particularly research aspect and the aspect of making it affordable to the common man. I had some discussion with some experts who had come for this photovoltaic conference the other day. They were quite enthusiastic about what they had to offer. We were also equally enthusiastic. Now, the question is how do we go about making the unit that is most appropriate for an Indian farmer, for an Indian village, for an Indian Panchayat. How do you reorient this particular energy to meet those needs? This is the question. Each one of them said, "We have got this, we have got that." I said, "Very good, you please show your units in one of our villages." I don't know what they have done thereafter, I gave instructions that any village which is about 30, 40 miles from Delhi, somewhere in Haryana or Ghaziabad or anywhere, the entire power system will be run by these people.

Why are our Electricity Boards in the red, most of them? Where is all the electricity going? It is not just the transmission losses, there are so many other losses, seen and unseen. So, if you have solar energy, you don't have all this. No hassle of any kind. You just put the thing there and it will work. It will work during daytime; you store it in a battery for night time. One can always do this fine tuning once the unit is available there. So, this has to be done.

You see the point to be stressed is that you must have the motivation for it. Anyone in the village who has got something to tap from the pole, he will not go in for anything new. He will go for something new only when he knows that the other thing is not available. You go to a village which is in a tribal area, fifteen miles from the nearest point where the main electricity can be tapped. They will tell you fifteen miles means fifteen lakhs or thirty lakhs of rupees, we don't have such money so you will not get electricity for the next fifteen years. Now do you want him to wait for the next fifteen years? This is the question. You must have something for that person there. You can't say, "I will complete all the cities, all the roadside villages, all the nearby villages and then come to you in the year 2010." This is not done. You will have to give him the type of energy which is suited to him which is available to him, which is affordable to him. Now, that is the real challenge.

I want you to ponder over these things. If you come together, forget about parties, forget about politics, forget about votes and put your heads together. Some Ministers and others are here. Please forget which party you belong to. Whichever party you belong to you have to do this because people will expect you to do this. So, it is the common need of the country, need of the villages and need of the people at large and whatever you do, you will not be able to completely fulfill your energy needs in the next half a century. It is not possible from the conventional sources. You have to go in for non-conventional sources, you have to go in for renewable sources. From the other sources it will not be possible; all projections point to this very clearly that you will not be able to fulfill your needs come what may. Therefore, it is time that we wake up and go to the sources that will be at our disposal for all time. It is a little difficult in the beginning but once we go ahead, the way will be clear to us as we go along. Nobody is going to tell us the entire way for, nobody knows how it is going to work. But if we have the economy of scale worked out into this scheme, I am sure that it becomes affordable, and that it will become easy for the Government to help the farmers also in going in for these things.

These are the economic aspects of this scheme and I hope you will go into them meticulously. I have given this homework to the department and I would like them to come back to me with whatever they have prepared and we will go ahead with this scheme. There are internationally well-known companies doing a lot of work, we can join them in research. This is what I told them also, I said, "We don't want only the result of what you have done, we would

like to be partners in what you are doing.” Once we become partners then both of us can really do it because research facilities are available, research brains are available in this country. So, one doesn’t have to go in as a junior partner with them. We are not junior partners in research at all, with any one in the world. Therefore, we have the scope, the possibility to join them on equal terms; maybe, they will be having a little more money, but that is all. Besides that we are equal to them in everything else and this is the programme you have to undertake and I hope you will do it in right earnest, I wish you all success.

Yes, about wind also this note says that you have just created about 40 Megawatts. What is 40 Megawatts? This doesn’t even deserve to be mentioned. So, you have lots of areas in this country where the wind is there all the 24 hours. So, you will have to develop the wind energy also in those areas. It is possible and in fact I have seen some of these windmills which can be made in the village itself. I have one in my district under the CSIR. There is really no great manufacture involved and if you really give them a job, within two years or three years they will do a very fine job of it. In fact, they will improve on your model. I have no doubt about the capability of our village artisans.

In all the other matters also I have seen that wherever improvisation is needed, the Indian farmer or the Indian artisan in the village is a very intelligent person; he may not have your book knowledge, may not be able to recite poems, but he will be able to get a thing done whenever there is failure of something. He will somehow improvise it and make it work. We have seen it in the days of the oil engines, we have seen it in the days of the older ploughs and so on; he has an answer for everything. I know it because I know it from my own experience. So, you have everything available here, only motivation is needed. Some concentration and research is needed and I am sure that in the next five or ten years we will be at the head of the table in the matter of Non-conventional Energy Sources. I have no doubt about that.

I wish you well. Please have your deliberations on constructive lines and come up with something which is actionable so that both at the Central Government level and at the State Government level, we can come together for a massive, a really massive programme of generating this non-conventional energy in the next five to ten years.

Inculcating Scientific Temper

MY HAPPINESS IN visiting this city is like the joy one feels on seeing one's parents. Such is my belief that whatever developments are taking place in this city or are likely to take place assume a basic significance for me.

I am extremely grateful to Naik Saheb and all those Ministers who paid attention to what I said about Maharashtra and extended assistance to the Government in the formation of the city. I am grateful to all of them on behalf of the Government. The children of Nagpur will be grateful to them because if the state of Maharashtra had not co-operated with me perhaps this city would never have been formed. What is known as scientific temper does not solely rest with science and scientists but this characteristic should form a part of the masses.

Those who work in science laboratories are indeed scientists but those who perform household chores or are involved in other trades should also have the scientific temperament of reasoning. It has often been observed that most of the scientific discoveries did not take place after contemplation but accidentally. When a fruit fell from a tree Newton came to know that there was some reason behind it.

There are many ordinary things, the phenomena of which are not understood by some people. Even the smallest thing should not be considered insignificant as it can have a major consequence. As such one should have the scientific inclination to reason any thing happening around right from the childhood. After coming to the Centre, it is often said that it is all for the children but not many of the adults know about it. Hence I believe that it is for the adults as well. In many of the houses the children's magazine "Chandamama" is subscribed for the children but the parents also enjoy reading it although they may not read it in front of the children. Similarly, such things are projected before the Centre as subjects confined to children but if the adults too learn something from it, there is no harm. As such it should not be restricted to children. On the pretext of children, the adults too can learn several things. I am observing a shortcoming here. As regards the planetarium, I have been saying for quite some time that it should be built. Some funds have been provided. For many years the Central Government has been providing funds for this purpose and

did not allow it to lapse. Even if the funds lapsed they were again made available. But for how long can we continue this process by flouting rules? The people will complain against this attitude and would say that we are partial towards you. This sort of partiality I am prepared to do for any one and for the sake of children it is justified but those who are responsible for utilising it should pay attention to this aspect. I am watching as to how soon you start this work because I would like to see it coming up and inaugurate it with my own hands. This will complete my work.

I have named it after Prof. Raman. In his lifetime Prof. Raman worked in Nagpur also and as such his life is linked with Nagpur. Even otherwise, he was an eminent scientist and anything that is named after him will be considered prestigious. I want this planetarium to progress by leaps and bounds and help in building a scientific temperament in the minds of scores of children. I want some applicational things to be here. For instance energy from solar light. Have you got any solar models? Today, in our country it is essential that we refrain from imitating other countries. The need of the hour is to make an attempt to make ourselves affluent by whatever is available with us. The biggest thing available to us and to other developing countries is sunlight which is something inexhaustible. Energy can be produced through it and if we succeed in the said technology we can save crores of rupees. I want that the electricity supplied to this centre should be through solar energy. We will have a panel put here after planning and you should get in touch with the people dealing with non-conventional sources of energy as they can get people from other countries also. Just now I had some interaction with people who are scientists and companies who have been working on the project of solar energy. It is in Germany, England, America and everywhere but they do not need it. They do not have so many people. We have, so it is for us to concentrate on that source of energy generation. We can ask one of them to have their panel put here if possible because you don't have to pay any electricity bill thereafter.

Let us have an inexhaustible source of energy for such centres. I could ask my personal secretary to get in touch with these people so that for the first time people would know as to how the sunlight about which every one knows can be used for industrial purposes, for creating energy, electricity and solving the problem of power shortage. You may not be knowing that we will not be self-sufficient in energy even after fifteen years. Efforts are being made to generate it further. In the next five year plan we have made sufficient provision in this regard. Despite this we will face paucity. Unless you supplement it and start using inexhaustible sources of energy, I apprehend that our country will not be able to produce as much

power and energy as is required. It is such a race in which your needs are steadily increasing but you will fail to raise funds and equipment required to fulfil the requirements. You are bound to face defeat and deficiency. I feel that in case we make some breakthrough we will always be successful in our venture. We tell people to set up industries at this place but the first question that is posed is how it can be done? At the outset they want to know whether you can provide them the basic infrastructures like power and water. If there is no water and electricity then how can a person venture to set up his factory? So, at the initial stage itself these things should be arranged. In case you try to think in terms of future you will come to the conclusion that coal and water are exhaustible sources. A lot of hue and cry is there regarding the pollution spread by coal. Water and waterfalls are not found everywhere except in some of the states like Himachal Pradesh.

When it rains, water becomes available in good quantity or in other words it is available during the season and when the season is over, the flow of water reduces. Same is the case with electricity. Similarly, there are many other things which have limitations. In our country there are places like Sahil which is situated on the banks of sea and the sea breeze blowing in such places is very strong. Recently it was noted in the western coast of Gujarat. A windmill has been set up there. Windmill is not a new discovery. Windmills have been functioning for the past thousands of years. There are many countries in Europe which discarded all the old things and were after those things on which expenditure is extremely high. People are now going back to windmills because to some extent it could meet our requirements. All these things are related to energy about which if people start thinking they will realise that whatever sources they want to start the outcome will be that they will be plunged into darkness for 24 hours. Have you seen any one switching off lights in offices? No, because of the simple reason that it belongs to Government. The general attitude of the people is so reckless that they do not care for anything. They do not pause to think how much electricity they are consuming, the quantity of water that is utilised and how much money is spent to get these things. In their house they will have their meals before sunset because otherwise lights shall have to be put on and they will have to pay. Economy should be maintained even in the case of the electricity for which Government bears the bill. There is no one in offices in the evenings except the Chowkidars. Then why are the lights of all the rooms kept on? This should be considered. Even in my Secretariat I have seen this. In our homes when a family member forgets to switch off the light we get annoyed and switch off the light. We should convene

a National Conference on these subjects. People should be made to realise that economy should be exercised in respect of these things and it is essential to develop new sources. To develop solar energy in this country I am prepared to foot the bill to any extent.

Somebody may say that we will have to bring the prices of electricity made from solar energy and the electricity from mains at par. As for the breakthrough of reducing prices, I will consider that person the greatest leader of the developing countries who succeeds in doing so. The developing countries will be ever grateful to him for his contribution. Recently we were talking about it in Kalmeswar. Raw materials like iron ore is available in almost all the villages. In the rural areas the quality of iron ore may vary. This iron ore is purchased by other countries and brought back to our country in finished forms and we purchase it at exorbitant price. Is there any wisdom in it? We should have the know-how of that technology. It is right that we can make some money by selling our raw materials. But this is something foolish that we give our raw materials to foreign countries at throw away prices and pay 10 to 25 times more than the original price for the finished product. This is not something dignified for a country like India. It used to happen 50 years ago when we were not independent. The people ruling us took away our raw materials and did not allow us to produce anything in our country. But what makes us follow the same course in Independent India?

We have the best quality of iron ore. It is said that the stock of our iron will exhaust in next fifty to sixty years. What shall we do thereafter? As such it is essential to conserve it and we should try to find out the ways through which iron can be extracted from inferior kind of ore also. This technology should be learnt from that place where it is available. In case it is not available it should be developed. Whatever expenditure is required to be incurred to undertake research in this field, we should meet it so that the raw material can be used indigenously.

In the field of science and technology there are many aspects which should undergo transformation. Some people are not happy about change because their interest is involved and they suffer loss. Personal loss is immaterial when compared with the interest of the country. Keeping in view the interest of the country, we have to take some hard decisions and be prepared to face the resentment expressed by some people. We are prepared to face it. In the light of it, I understand that the country should take a new or a scientific turn. In case a technology becomes obsolete it should be changed and a new technique should take its place and our aim should be to work for its improvement and development. This attitude should

be encouraged by the Government, the people, the institutions and such centers. In case this attitude can be inculcated among children right from their childhood, they can do a commendable job. They may be involved in any work or trade but it is very essential to develop this attitude in them and from this angle I congratulate those who have set up this science centre. This country should have many such centres. At present there are about 18 to 20 centres and this number is deplorably insufficient. I think the country should be full of such centres. There should be at least one such centre in each district. It will be ensured that it does not remain confined to district headquarters, but an attempt to bring children from rural areas to show and explain to them its functioning will be our aim. At the same time the leading industries, industrialists and the multi-millionaires can contribute to some extent in this direction. They can open such centres for the children living in nearby areas. They can at least set up a few centres and the Government can also provide some assistance in this direction.

If the children are motivated by these centres it is ideal for the children as well as for us. It will be beneficial for this region and many things can be performed through the co-ordination between the Government, the industries and other institutions in this direction. If we formulate a scheme in this regard it will prove extremely productive. All these ideas need to be implemented. We have in us the power of organising and contemplation and as such we can spread these ideas further. Hence we will begin this work. We expect from citizens, officers and the people of this area to understand that this programme which is underway will not be beneficial from the first day itself. It is not a give and take matter but when it is something related to intellect and development of thoughts, it is certainly a time consuming process. The development that takes place is not instant and cannot be seen at the first sight. But it definitely takes place. The progress that takes place is felt in due course. This aspect should be understood. The work on this planetarium should start within next two to four months and I should get a report to this effect. I am placing this in the hands of the Hon'ble Chief Minister. As long as you do not give any money it is left unattended. You have already put Rs. 38 to 40 crores in it and you have to deal with the future situation also. We will stand by you and the job will be done.

Need for Suitable Software

IT IS A long time since I came to Tirupati. I wanted to visit Tirupati in my usual way. Then I never thought I would come here for a special occasion. But everything worked out favourably. This political programme took place. It is not just a political programme. In my view it is a programme related to nation's future and its unity. It is not just that one single party people assembled, praised each other and left. It has great significance. That programme alongwith God's work, Deity's Darshan—all came together. These things do not exist separately in life. As soon as we get up in the morning we pay obeisance to Lord. But we don't do it through out the day. Afterwards we get absorbed in our own work. In this absorption too we remember God now and then. He is there somewhere within us ringing a warning bell not to do a wrong deed. It is a different thing if one does not want to listen to this. It is said God's work is good work. There is spiritual aspect and there is practical aspect. These two are not different things. They always mingle and incessantly move the man forward.

Here in front of me I see a windmill *Vayupuranam* is not unknown to us. At least for some people it is not unknown. In that *Purana* we came to know of the strength and power of wind. So the example of *Vayupuranam* is here before us. In Holland for a few hundred years there was nothing else except this to generate power. Whenever they required power for any work they used to make use of this power. Recently when I went to Holland I asked them to show me that old windmill. They said, "It is all over. Now we have electricity." I told them, "For you it may be finished but we may need it still. Show me anything you might have abandoned as useless. We have what is called *Vayupuranam*. Our people know about the wind power for very long now. Let me see the windmill." So specially I made an effort to see a windmill there.

The windmills are not working in Holland. People are not running them any more. Still I went to that abandoned windmill and spent half an hour there enquiring about its working and other aspects. Today for us it is an appropriate technology. Understanding—is the technology with us, or even if it is, are we using it—this sort of understanding is not there. This is a blend of new and old. I do not know what is new and what is old. It is we who

are using these labels old and new. But is *Vayupuranam* old? If so windmill is also old. So whatever implements there are of wind, they are not new. The old is coming before us in a new form. We do not know what is traditional and what is modern. Human life is moving forward with the combination of the two.

In our vedas, puranas, even in the short stories narrated by our grandmothers, or in the songs, we have capsulised science. In this country, in every language we come across songs and poems related to Ayurveda. Our literature never started with prose. It started with poetry. Even our medicine started with poetry. Why? Because it is convenient to recite, convenient to remember if it is prose, it is not so convenient. From the beginning our literature, epic literature had been poetic. That is why it is still prevalent. Some people just recite it blindly like mantras without knowing the meaning because it is their profession. But that is not enough. Only a few can practise well and can recite it meaningfully. In our country everything starts scientifically and later on becomes just a ritual. Then it needs a revolution. Some great man will arrive one day to reinterpret and say, "It is not just a ritual, there is so much behind this." Then it will be restored. Our old knowledge and science are being restored. We are in that stage now.

Sunlight and wind are given to us free by nature without taking anything in return. Can we make use of them? We can. But we always prefer something which was readied by someone else. Because of that fancy we are not able to use the wealth which is naturally available to us. This wealth is limitless and there is no problem of exhausting it. After fifty years the coal you have will be finished. Then what will you do? After twenty years your underground petrol will be finished. Then what will you do? If these limited resources are finished, nothing will remain for the future generations. Instead of doing that, it is better to use God given inexhaustible wealth. For that we need science. We need technology. They say its costs are high. We should know how to bring down those costs.

I remember the time when the radio first came. Then I was studying in Warangal College. That day was a festive day for us. No one attended the classes. Why? Because the radio came to the college. How big was that? As big as an iron safe. To operate that, as if it were a great technique to turn the knobs, there was an intensive search for a suitable person. The whole day our principal thought over it and at last selected me thinking perhaps I would not break it. So I got the training—how to start it, how to increase or decrease the volume etc. We had a celebration that day. What did they call it? Akashavani. From where did this Akashavani come?

It is there in our epics even before the advent of the radio. It is there in our puranas. Akashavani or Ashariravani, meaning the sound without body. It is a beautiful expression. Before that they used to call it "All India Radio". It took sometime to give this name.

Now no one knew about Doordarshan. Television they understood. Doordarshan too came from our puranas. This is in our tradition. Man can see everything which is not visible otherwise either to open or closed eyes. Is there no science in this? The one who wrote this might not have written after considerable research. At least he imagined it. Man has so much power. He can see beyond what he can normally see. The one with the power of penance can see anything. This is what our people wrote about. Though actually things are not visible, an instrument can be made through which they are made visible. Man has power to make such an instrument. In this context only we use Ashariravani, Akashavani or Doordarshan. These powers are within us and are latent for very long. No one tried to bring them out. In the meantime outsiders came and imposed on us whatever was profitable to them and whatever helped their trade. Only now we are removing one by one all those imposed things and are trying to realise what do we ourselves have.

Just now it is said a large scale programme of Vedas took place here. In India there are many small organisations. Poor things, they don't have any money. Some people, a few dedicated workers invite vedic scholars sometimes and try to find out what is hidden in Vedas. After a good deal of research it is found that there are many scientific facts in Vedas. These revelations are coming out gradually. I am very happy about it. Even Tirupati Devasthanam has decided to participate in this programme in a big way. I am indeed very happy about it.

Sometime ago money from Tirupati Devasthanam was spent on Arts and Science Colleges. That was before 1966 when the new Act was not in existence. Then M.L.A.s, M.Ps, Ministers—all were agitated. Whatever was to be done at the government expense was being done at Devasthanam's expense. Then Tenneti Vishwanatham, myself—I was a minister then—and a few more got together and thought there should be an end to this. Let them have *Veda Pathashalas*, let them encourage *Ayurveda* or let them do anything related to our culture. Devasthanam's funds should be spent on these and not on arts and science colleges which should be run by the government. Devasthanam had already given five lakh rupees to the University. So we thought we would let it continue and also the running of a couple of colleges. We did not

let them take up such programmes any more. A sort of ban was imposed. That is why now they are able to handle these important programmes, otherwise the money would have been spent on arts and science colleges alone. So those who are in the government should think about which money should be utilised where.

Today we have got Doordarshan centre here. It can relay programmes up to one hundred and twenty miles or kilometres. Good. But our job is not just to transmit. If you spend money you can have a transmitter. That is not important. What are you going to show is important. Is it only cinemas? That means, poor cinema people have to go bankrupt. No one will visit cinema halls. They all sit at home and watch TV. Is it what we have to show, or should we have programmes that spread knowledge, science and other things which are useful to people?

The software has much importance. How they work, how they get it done, I don't know. Because it is full of problems. One person comes with this programme and says, "It is a great programme". When one sees it, the programme turns out to be a useless one. But that person will not agree because he has done it. Even an ugly duckling is it's mother's darling. So that person starts propaganda like "This Ajit Panja did not accept my programme because someone from Bengal said that my programme should be rejected." That statement gets highlighted in a box item the next day. With that Shri Ajit Panja is in trouble. This is the danger in software.

There should be people's representatives to say which are useful and which are not. We need a person who can say authoritatively that this programme is not liked by common man. We don't want a great scholar. We want just a student to tell us if a movie is all right or not, if a show is good or not. If he says "I just can't understand a thing" then it should be cancelled. If a common villager says, "Sir, this is not good. We are not able to see. We can see but cannot understand, it is above our heads," then it should be rejected. So, for the selection we don't need real scholars. We need ordinary people who can represent the audience. If we can filter programmes like that we will have good programmes. That is the new era which is going to dawn now.

We have to take Doordarshan to villages. What have we to teach them through this? No point just giving a lesson. We have to motivate them. Instead of just haranguing we should see that the idea is generated within them after seeing the programme. This is subtlety. If that subtlety is not there, people will think it is all slogan mongering and shut down their sets. One should understand which programmes are liked by the people. People should feel,

“Oh, is it already over? I wish it were there for some more time.” We want such programmes. It requires time. But I am glad it is going on the right lines. They are trying as far as possible. Nothing can be perfect. There is nothing perfect in human life. In fact man himself is not perfect. So one cannot say any man-made thing can be perfect. Only God is perfect. But the man, made by Him, is not perfect. I am very happy to inaugurate this. I hope this will be successfully run disseminating knowledge and information.

Science for Development

I AM INDEED very happy to be associated with this function. I thank the organisers for giving me the opportunity to give away the awards to the scientists who have done such good work, excellent work in their respective fields. Most of the awardees I find have done something which is close to the interests of the people, to the lives of the people, and this seems to me to be the distinctive feature of this group. I have given awards to many. Almost every fortnight there is such a function. I am happy about it but this has something special, something which I should make mention of.

This is where both pure science and applied science should go hand in hand. You just cannot be applying whatever you have done all the time forgetting that there is something in the pure science field which needs to be added on to. At the same time, you cannot be sitting in the laboratory or with your papers doing all the calculations and proving things which are quite fantastic to look at but are nowhere translated into action or into a programme good for the people. So, both have to be taken care of.

I am glad that we are trying to take care of both. Maybe in the process we are not taking care of either adequately. But that is how it is. In this country where resources are scarce, one has to put up with certain amount of inadequacy in whatever one does. We have done well. We could do better and we have to do better.

I have been to Pauri Garhwal just the day before yesterday. Before that when the earthquake occurred I went to the Uttarkashi

area. Now, people were telling me that there is something wrong with the designs of their houses. It should be obvious when houses collapse in thousands. The other day they told me in Pauri that the earthquake if it occurs again would not only damage the structures but would take the lives of hundreds of people, they would be simply killed under the debris. I was not quite able to answer them because we have a research institute right there in this Roorki University at the foothills and I thought they were doing something about it. I was told by Dr. Bhandari and some other friends that they have been doing something about the earthquake prone areas and the designs of houses there. I have no doubt that they have been doing it. That would be the obvious thing to think of for an institute like that.

But what was not clear to me is that why this did not travel up to the villages to educate people, people who ought to know. This is the missing link.

So, you have to do something. You have to be seen as doing something and what you do has to reach the beneficiaries. I am sure it is not your job, it is somebody else's and that somebody else is not doing his job. That is the missing link we have to supply.

Prof. Menon came to me once or twice with a certain amount of agony that the scientific community and the scientific programme in the country are receiving a setback. The programme is not going on as it should. Well, I agree. There are far too many distractions for the Government to single out one area for special attention. But I agree that this is an area which does deserve special attention. There is nothing less than special attention. There are some areas where you can have some kind of *Udati Udati* attention and still it will go on. I mean this will not go on like that. Either there is special attention or there is none. I agreed with him. We immediately moved in the matter and maybe in the next few days or weeks we will be coming up with something quite cogent and comprehensive to the extent our resources permit. Whenever there is something brought to my notice and no less a person than Prof. Menon himself bringing it to my notice, it has some significance because he has been in the field and he knows where the shoe is pinching.

So I took the advice of Prof. Menon as well as others and we got to examine in what manner whatever is missing is brought back.

This is a continuous programme of appraisal and even if you do it once it has to be continued. I mean there should be no break. Once there is a break, then whatever you have done goes waste. So, this kind of programme has to be nurtured continuously. I agree,

I understand the need for this and in spite of all the other distractions and so called priorities... there is a joke about priorities: whatever comes before you is a priority. I remember to have attended one conference of Health Ministers where every disease was very strongly urged as "Top Priority." I said how many "tops" are there. So, every disease was put as TP, TP, Top Priority, so at the end of it we only ended with all top priorities and nothing less than top. So, even in prioritisation there has to be some method in this area of science and technology.

I assure you that whatever is possible will be done and with whatever speed that is possible it will be done with that speed. I congratulate the awardees. I am very happy today about the fields in which they have been working. Of course, I know some of them personally, so I knew what they were doing, but others also like in agriculture and other fields. The Gene Bank for instance is a matter of national honour. We have taken it up as India's programme for developing countries. If we don't show anything it is not just India that loses, but India's prestige abroad that loses. The other field is of solar energy. Now I have been putting some pressure on those who are responsible for it. I think there has been some dynamism induced in that and we hope to be able to do something for the developing countries, not for the sake of making money, not for the sake of selling it but because the developing countries have to help themselves before they can expect help from others. As a programme, as a part of the VCDC or the DCDC, we are doing it. These two areas I am very particular about because this would mean that India's position among the developing countries will be assured if we do something worthwhile.

I hope that we will be able to do this given the good work done by our scientists. I once again congratulate them. I would once again assure you that whatever is possible under the circumstances will be done and I would like to pay special attention to it, personal attention to it so far as it is possible for a Prime Minister with all the other things to do.

IV
Education, Culture
and Sports

Promoting National Integration through Arts

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to participate in the second convocation of the Telugu University. I am thankful to the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, members of the Board of Management of the University, for their affection in inviting me to be the Chief Guest at this Convocation.

When Dr. C. Narayana Reddy, Vice-Chancellor of the University, met me in the second week of May and extended the invitation, I could not say 'no' for two reasons. First, a renowned poet and recipient of the highest literary honour of Jnanpith, Dr. Narayana Reddy is a good friend of mine for long. When he gave a detailed account of the programmes and progress of the University I felt like availing myself of the opportunity to come here and personally congratulate the staff and students of this University. It is always a pleasure for me to visit Andhra Pradesh, specially Hyderabad. I was born and brought up in a village of this State. I learnt my first alphabet here. My first moves in the direction of service to the country were made from here. So, a visit to Hyderabad affords me an opportunity to meet friends and colleagues. This was the other reason that made me accept the invitation.

Andhra Pradesh is placed in a central position, geographically. This State stands like a bridge between the North and the South. One finds here a happy blend of the cultures of the North and the South. Apart from the long coast line to the East, the State is surrounded on the other three sides by regions speaking Oriya, Hindi, Marathi, Kannada and Tamil. While the State symbolises the fusion of the North and the South, its capital, the City of Hyderabad, is a miniature India in itself. Several faiths, languages and traditions flourish here in harmony. Urdu which is spread all over the country has a significant place here. In fact, Urdu is closely knit with the history of the erstwhile Hyderabad State. The Osmania University had set up a model in imparting instruction through Urdu as early as 1919. I am one of those who had their education in that University in Urdu medium. Now I feel that this University, based on Telugu as medium of instruction is in step with the tradition of Hyderabad.

My very first visit to Hyderabad (after becoming P.M.) makes me feel as if I had a glimpse of the entire country.

Several great poets have depicted our country, India, in their poetic works. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee painted the magnificent and glorious picture of the country in his celebrated song "Vande Matram". Viswakavi Tagore presented a superb picture of our country in his immortal song. He incorporated the names of various regions in it so that we may chant again and again. It was most appropriate that this song "Jana Gana Mana" was adopted as our National Anthem. By doing so we daily adore our vast and great motherland.

This ancient land of ours has a continuous story of brilliance since a hoary past. The plains of the Ganges and the Sindh became Aryavarttha after the advent of the Aryans and marched ahead towards a multi-faceted progress. Our Vedic literature had been a universal source of inspiration and enlightenment. It was here that fresh religious thought in the form of Buddhism and Jainism took birth and bestowed a new light on the human existence. This land was ruled by numerous dynasties. This land had been the target of many invasions. Yet, our country withstood all vicissitudes like a rock. We had also learnt our lessons, specially about the unpleasant consequences of disunity. This great country became homeland for people of different nationalities, religions and languages.

However, the fact remains that the core and soul of the country has been maintained intact. The country could adopt to the new circumstances at every stage and further, it could appropriate and absorb the newness into its systems. In all matters—be it religion or language or tradition or art—we find that diversity is only external and that there is a characteristic unity at the core. That is why India stands out as a living example of unity in diversity in the eyes of the world. Every Indian ought to realise this essential character of our country. Then only our horizons can be widened. If one is baffled by the outward differences and fails to notice the underlying unity, then his vision becomes narrow.

We may examine the area of language as an example of unity in diversity. Ours, of course, is a multi-lingual land. Owing to the historical, social and cultural factors referred to earlier we have four main families of languages in our country. Apart from Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages there are other linguistic groups also. According to philologists there are 179 languages and 544 dialects in our country. These dialects are changing day by day and new dialects are also evolving. When people migrate from one place to the other a new dialect takes shape in their day to day conversation. So it is to be understood that they are not just



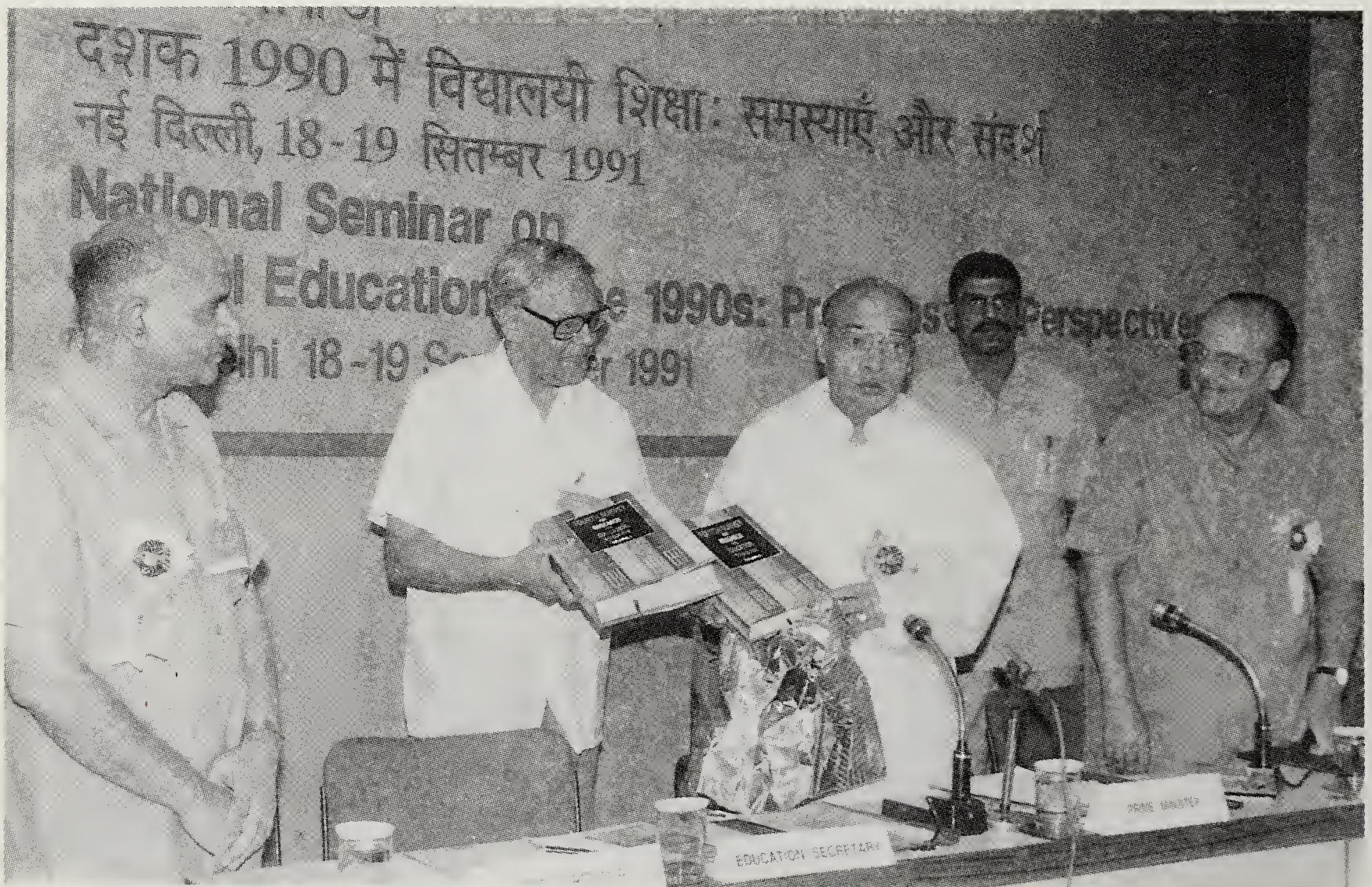
*At the Second Convocation of Telugu University, Hyderabad,
7 July 1991*



With a group of Banjaras, New Delhi, 9 August 1991



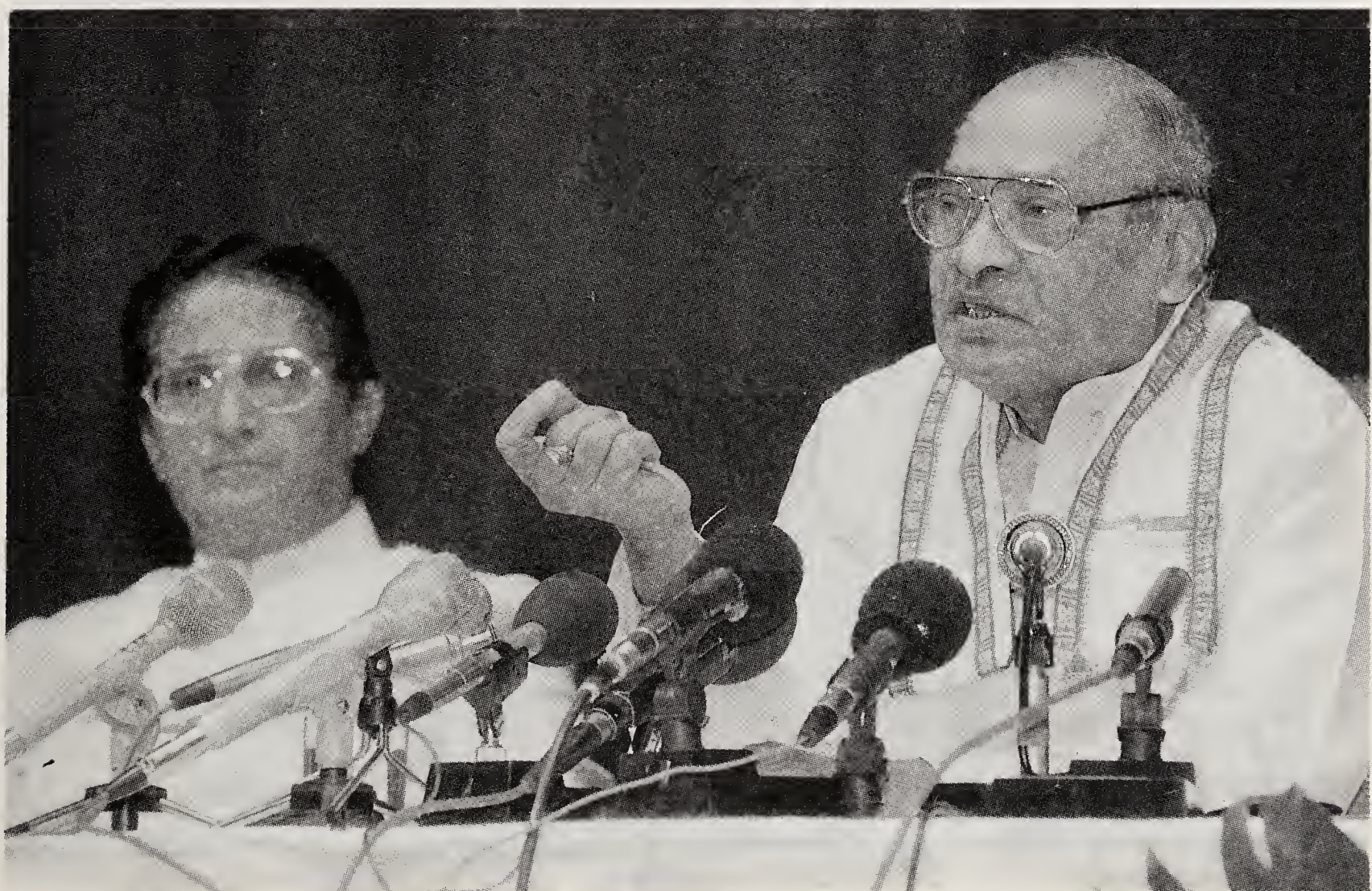
*With the team of Indo-Soviet mountaineering expedition in
Himalayas, New Delhi, 30 August 1991*



*Inaugurating a National Seminar on School Education in 1990's,
New Delhi, 18 September 1991*



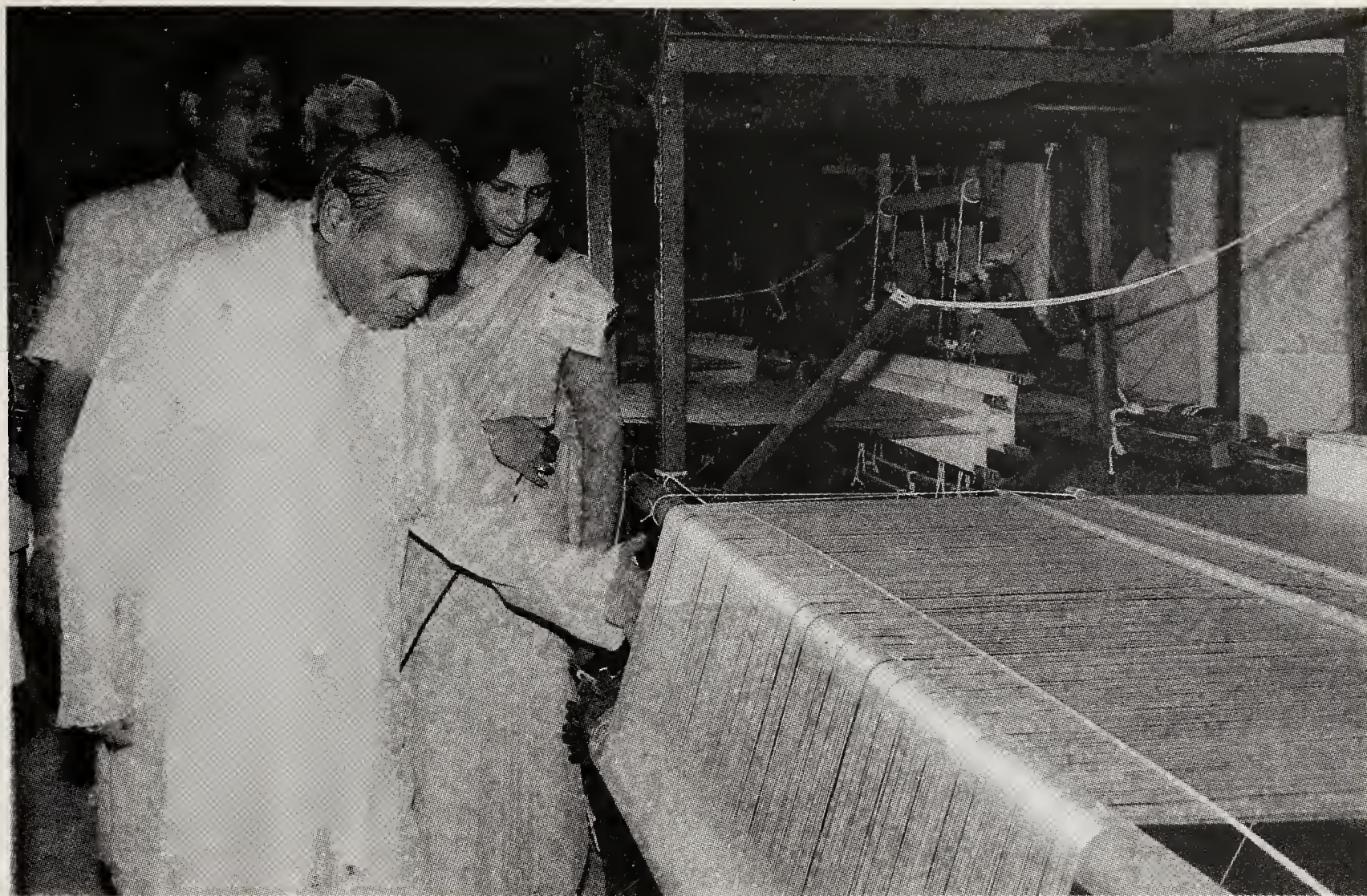
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Addressing a Press Conference, New Delhi, 30 June 1992



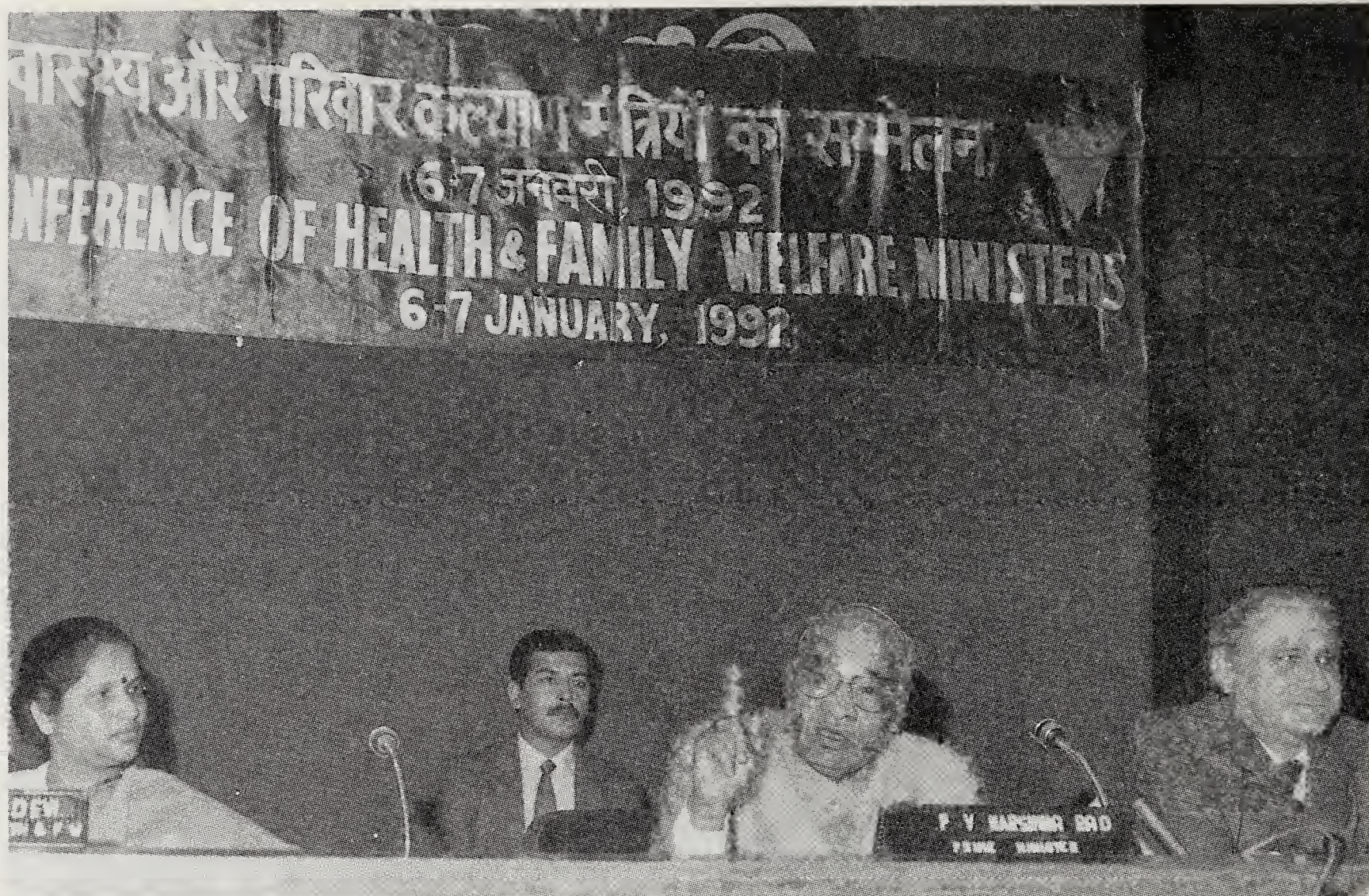
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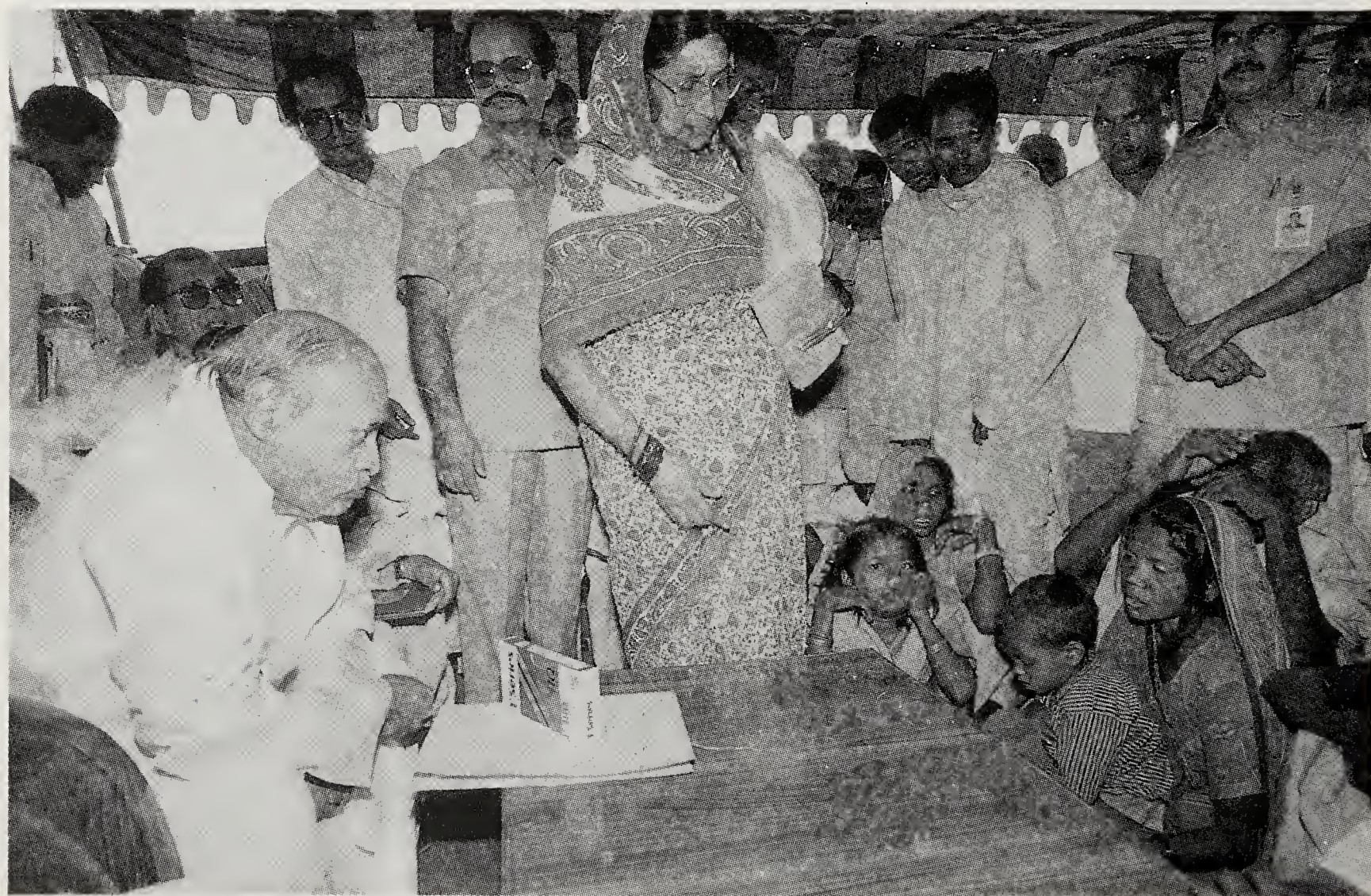
*Inaugurating Rural Industrialisation Programme 'VISWA' at
Yelahanka Agrahara near Bangalore, 2 October 1991*



*Launching a scheme for effective reach of Public Distribution
System in drought prone Barmer, Rajasthan, 1 January 1992*



*Inaugurating a Conference of Health and Family Welfare Ministers,
New Delhi, 6 January 1992*



*Talking to tribal women at Raghunath Nagar, Madhya Pradesh,
7 April 1992*



With the recipients of Gold Medals at International Physically Handicapped Sports Tournament held at Australia, New Delhi, 4 December 1991



Opening Rajiv Gandhi Gold Cup International Football Tournament in Jamshedpur, 12 January 1992



With children of Minicoy, Lakshadweep, 9 February 1992



Convocation Address at Viswa-Bharati, 21 March 1992

only 544 but their number is increasing day by day. Pali, Arthamagadhi and Prakrit are considered as classical languages. In our education system we have included classical foreign languages like Arabic, Persian and Latin and eight foreign modern languages like German, Spanish, Italian, French, Russian and Chinese besides English.

In spite of such huge multiplicity we find a basic cohesiveness in the literatures of several Indian languages. Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan put this idea in a cogent expression when he said "Indian literature is one though written in many languages". When this truth is realised, the appeal of literatures in various languages transcends the language barriers paving way for an ardent integration. Our ancestors took advantage of the variety of languages to cultivate and enrich the Indian literature. There might not have been so much of extensive literature and so many great poets if there had been only one language for the entire country. Adikavi Valmiki composed the great epic Ramayana in Sanskrit. Several Ramayanas that appeared in various regional languages do not fall short of it in poetic beauty. Even translations of the work have attained no mean excellence. The Kamba Ramayana in Tamil, Ramcharitmanas of Tulsidas in Hindi, Bhaskara Ramayanam in Telugu, Ezhuthachan's Adhyatma Ramayanam in Malayalam, Eknath Ramayana in Marathi and such others are highly regarded universally.

Such phenomenon can be noticed in other areas also. When viewed in this light, we see before our eyes the comprehensive picture of our great country in its myriad facets of languages, literatures, arts, culture and traditions. That is the radiant figure of our motherland in her full glory.

Any discrepancy in one's thinking will not allow him to recognise such comprehensive picture of our country. As barriers rise, the sense of belonging gets blunted, selfishness prevails, a narrow outlook of restricted confinement predominates and the capacity to respect and love thy neighbour recedes. This will be a death blow to national integration and integrity.

When one loses broad outlook, conflicts, animosities and ill-will come to rule, leading to widespread clashes and acts of violence. As a result, peaceful public life is disturbed. A colossal loss of public and private property and, much more, loss of precious human lives is taking place. Such state of affairs does no good to any country and more so to a country like ours, which is striving to forge ahead. Now is the time when we have to face with unity and determination the several problems cropping up in areas like health, population growth and employment. Any disturbance at this

juncture is perilous. Each one of us, therefore, has to eschew such undesirable trend and come together to work for the progress of the country with all sincerity at command.

Mainly the youth and students of the country have a pivotal role to play in this enormous task. Once Swami Vivekananda proclaimed that he could consider even a particle of dust of this country as the holiest of the holy and asserted with confidence that this great country would rise high and no external force could restrain its progress. The onus of realising that Great Soul's dream is on us.

The youth of the country should shoulder the responsibility of creating a bright future for the country. The right to vote has been given to all those who have completed eighteen years. Thus they are saddled with a right to devolve political power. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru laid foundations for the spread of technical education in the country. He felt that it was essential to turn to science and technology if the country was to progress and compete with developed nations. He expressed his confidence in science and believed that scientific outlook could and would transform the world.

The system of education in our country is acquiring a new spirit. The New National Education Policy formulated under the dynamic leadership of Rajiv Gandhi forms the basis for it. This policy defines the comprehensive role of the system of education and provides guidelines for the total development of the student community. I feel it would be appropriate to recall the salient features of the new policy on this occasion.

The new policy attaches greater importance to scientific, technological and vocational education and also to distance, and continuing education. It gives priority to education for girls and for cultural development. This policy envisages equality in education and takes care of national integration. Formulation of common syllabus is a special feature of this policy.

I hope that this new national policy would invigorate education in our country.

I am happy that Andhra Pradesh has taken the lead in this regard. Even before the Indira Gandhi National Open University was established by the Government of India, the State of Andhra Pradesh set up the Andhra Pradesh Open University, the first of its kind in India.

The report of the Vice-Chancellor informs that the Telugu University is stepping out of its infancy and has taken up a variety of programmes in teaching, research, publication and many other

activities. I am happy about it. This University is unique in its character. I am also happy that language and literature, arts and culture occupy a special place here. Art and culture help in development of personality. Emerson said, "Culture puts a man among his equals and superiors and revives the delicious sense of sympathy".

I am happy that education in this University is imparted through the medium of Telugu. You know how as a part of our freedom movement we strove to make the regional languages as media of instruction and administration. Development of regional languages was an essential item of the constructive programme of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji made it clear that he was not against English which contained a wealth of knowledge. Yet, he stressed the need to work to introduce mother tongues as medium of instruction. Referring to a widespread complaint that there were not enough terms to express all shades of thought, he pointed out that the defect was not in the languages but in the language users. He clearly stated that once the languages were put to use, they would grow. I think that this special responsibility lies with those Universities which have adopted or likely to adopt the regional languages as medium of instruction. Educationalists opine that a student who learns through the medium of his mother tongue will have more reasoning and understanding. Do our educational institutions corroborate this? Nevertheless we cannot underestimate the importance of world language like English to gain the upper reaches of knowledge. I submit that the responsibility to give equal importance for these two opinions lies with the institutions like Telugu University. Though Telugu is the medium of instruction, this University should prove to the world that its students are no way inferior to any others in the field of knowledge. If we fail in this effort it remains to be an institution with a medium of mother tongue only and it would fail to impart knowledge, which is, day by day, increasing. I feel that this Telugu University will shoulder this challenging task and I wish success in its efforts.

Jawaharlal Nehru said, "It is axiomatic that the masses can grow educationally and culturally through the medium of their own languages". It is my personal experience. Ten years ago in every country in Europe, whether it is small or big, their people learnt through their mother tongue only and no other language was taught to them. But since five years they learnt conversing in English also apart from their own language. I was so surprised when a foreign minister spoke to me in English who on an earlier occasion spoke only in his mother tongue. He told me that of late learning of English or French in their countries has become a convention.

Leaders in those countries have realised the importance of learning a world language to communicate with the outside world for their own existence and future. Basing on this conclusion, children are being taught either English or French as second language in those countries. Now this realisation is picking up slowly and we should not forget that an institution based on a single language as medium of instruction has the special responsibility to improve in all aspects of that language and culture and in addition it should establish correlation with other languages and their cultures.

It is commendable that the Telugu Akademi set up in Andhra Pradesh has been continuously working in evolving technical terms and books required for teaching. It is noteworthy that the Government of Andhra Pradesh has paid special attention to implement Telugu as the official language. A separate body called Official Language Commission is functioning in Andhra Pradesh all along. It is also a matter of happiness that the Government of Andhra Pradesh is implementing the three-language formula effectively.

I find that Fine Arts have a special place in the curriculum in the Telugu University. Dance, Music and Folk Arts transcend the language barriers and are universal in their appeal. Besides entertainment they provide enlightenment and bring people together and closer.

Culture has a significant role in the progress of the country and the nation. It can promote the unity of the nation. National integration is not a feature of mere politics. Real integration is only possible through cultural integration. This country's unity lies in its culture. It is the culture that brought unity. Political and economic unity are subsequent. Cultural unity is the foremost. If we lose this cultural unity, the very unity of the country will be affected. We should never forget that cultural unity is the very foundation for our integration. This is very clearly defined in the New Education Policy and certain decisions have been taken, some are being taken, and still there are some decisions yet to be taken. I don't think that the line of thinking has reached an end. It is a fact that a beginning was made and to some extent it gained momentum. Really speaking, few realise that culture is the main foundation for our unity and if we do not give it proper place in our system of education the real unity will be hampered. I again submit to you that this is very important.

Andhra Pradesh is known for arts. The Kuchipudi School of Dance is the unique contribution of the Telugus to the world of dance. It is commendable that the Telugu University offers a Master's Degree course in Kuchipudi Dance. One more style of

dance we can take pride in is the “Pereni Siva Tandavam” a virile style of dance. *Nritta Ratnavali* of Jayappa provides theory for this. The sculptures in the Ramappa temple near Warangal provide practical models for the postures of this dance based on the *slokas* of that great work. It is heartening to find this style of dance acquiring greater recognition. I have noticed that in one form or the other the art forms of other countries which are very special to those regions are also available in our arts and similarly our art forms could be found in other countries though slightly modified or different in style. Thereby one feels that this cultural heritage is one and collective to the entire world. A good lot of research has to be undertaken in this regard.

We feel related to each other when we notice the similarity in our culture and tradition. So the fine arts will help in bringing the emotional integration among the people and in inculcating the feeling of universal brotherhood. The speciality of this University is it is conducting research and teaching about these fine arts. I feel it is essential to start this type of programme in all parts of the country. We can do this not only through University but also through many other institutions and means, and a serious thought in this regard will be given at an opportune time in the days to come.

Many research scholars and students have received degrees and diplomas in this convocation. Meritorious candidates received gold medals. I congratulate them all on their success. I also congratulate the teaching staff and Vice-Chancellor for their diligent and dedicated work.

I hope and trust that these scholars will work hard to secure a bright future for themselves and the nation as well.

I heartily congratulate the eminent editor Dr. Nanduri Rama Mohan Rao and versatile actor and scholar Dr. Kongara Jaggaiah.

I once again thank the Telugu University for according the opportunity of associating myself with this convocation and convey my best wishes to one and all.

School Education Needs Micro-Study

I AM INDEED very happy to be associated with this Seminar on the occasion of the completion of thirty years of NCERT. I have been aware of the achievements of this institution almost from the time it was born and I have been following with interest the progress that it has made from Five Year Plan to Five Year Plan, from decade to decade, from stage to stage. So, I am one of those who know this institution fairly well and I do not have to be briefed on the details of its working.

I am happy that you are having a seminar now. This seminar would naturally look back with a certain amount of pride, certain amount of criticism, certain amount of discontent or dissatisfaction at what has not been done and then look to the future, project what the NCERT has to do in the future. You have taken a limited area of scrutiny—School Education. It is a good thing you have done and this is, perhaps, one of the best ways of celebrating an occasion. So, I wish you well in your deliberations.

Again, I am reminded that when I was in Human Resource Development, I was insisting on being called for the valedictory functions so that I would know something about what you have deliberated upon. The way I was being called for inaugurations, I felt that they thought that the deliberations were irrelevant so far as I am concerned, so they used to dispose of the inaugurations within one hour and then get down to serious business. So, I said, “I won’t have it; I must be there at the concluding sessions so that I would know what you have really come up with, if any. I do not want you to conceal if you have not come up with anything good.” So, this is again happening to me as Prime Minister. But in any case, I know there is someone else to take care of it as well as I used to and I am sure Arjun Singhji will attend it.

It is good to have these seminars as I said. But again, statistics, as Arjun Singhji points out, are important but do not be lost in statistics, do not be lost in going into the causes too much; it is much too complex a matter in a way. What could be a very relevant cause for a particular phenomenon in Kerala may not be the relevant cause for Kashmir or Uttar Pradesh or some other State.

So, what are we really talking about? We are talking about something which amounts to nothing taking the country as a whole. So, it is better to go into a block and find out why something has not been done in that block or maybe in that village rather than generalising it on the whole country. In a matter like education, statistics do not really give you a full picture, a clear picture. Yes, it may be good for UNESCO or UNDP or some other international organisations to find an average for the whole country. But in education I do not see any meaning in an average for the whole country where literacy varies from 96 per cent or 98 per cent to 30 per cent or in the case of girls maybe 25 per cent or 22 per cent. This variation is so large that no amount of averaging is going to give you any picture anywhere near the truth. It is just a figure which means almost nothing.

So, I want the Seminar, if possible, to consider the thrust areas—what needs to be done—and the area will take care of itself. The area, if it finds that a particular suggestion given by you has already been done, has already been implemented then there is nothing for them to do, they will say yes this has been done already. Now, if you say literacy has to grow from 60 to 65 per cent, the Kerala people will say “What are you talking about, we have already done 96 per cent.” So, there is nothing for them to do. But then you will have to tell them something equally challenging—what does a State which has attained 96 per cent literacy do hereafter? Are they to rest on their oars? Are they to go on parading their achievements day in and day out?

Or, is there anything for them further to do? Now, that is what you will have to prescribe for each State or area in a State if you like. So, this is where averages will not count. What will count is your micro-study.

I am sure that NEPA (National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration) and NCERT have been very good at micro-studies. I know this as a fact because when we were struggling with the new educational policy the kind of feedbacks that we got from blocks, from villages, from districts, it was quite elaborate and it was heartening to see that the love for detail which is the crux of the educational process could be seen in the work done by NEPA.

Again, if it means that you have to go into the nitty-gritty, into the micro-levels to find out how at those very micro-levels correctives have to be applied, you just cannot apply the correctives where they do not belong, where they are not relevant. So, that is one aspect.

The other aspect is, which you will of course be talking about, universalisation of primary or elementary education, you will be talking or thinking about the Operation Blackboard which was conceived of as a nationwide programme for improving primary education. I am being very brief because I do not want to take much of your time. I just want to tell you that if you are giving the primary education to children until the age of 14 including non-formal, including whatever is to supplement the education proper, you are not doing any great favour to the people; you are just doing what the Constitution wants you to do. As Government I do not find myself doing any favour to the people. I am only doing my duty with the difference that what the Constitution wanted me to do in ten years I am not being able to do even after forty years—that is all very straight. The boy or the girl who gets primary education is not equipped for something else to face life. That comes in that part of the education pyramid which is covered by secondary education. That is where you prepare the boy or the girl to face life, the realities of life, the challenges of life, the requirements of life. Before that it is really something which the State is supposed to do anyway; no credit is due to the State. Of course, we do take credit because where there was nothing, we have done something. To that extent, yes, as an achievement *per se* you can take the credit. But as a component of the holistic development of the individual in this country, you start with the secondary part of the education because it is there that the jump comes, the real break-through, the real take-off comes; that is the take-off stage. So, I have been thinking about this.

Anil (Mr. Anil Bordia, Secretary for Education) just gave me some figures which I am a little out of date with. According to the figures given by him, there are sixty thousand secondary schools and thirteen thousand senior secondary or higher secondary schools, junior colleges. This is really the backbone of real education where you contribute to the wealth of the nation, you contribute to the projection of the nation as a competent, as an efficient nation among the comity of nations and this is where you contribute to the whole world. So, I do not think it will be possible for you to ignore this part of the school education.

I want some special study and special attention to be paid to this because it is in this field that we are not very clear as to what is to be done.

We have taken vocationalisation starting from Mudaliar Commission's Report. We have been groping, we have been struggling, we have been grappling with this problem but today we cannot say that the situation is very satisfactory. There is

something missing somewhere. I can't really point my finger or put my finger at exactly the spot where things have gone wrong or not going right as they ought to. But I must say that in this part of the educational pyramid something needs to be done.

Now, we have talked about the educational pyramid in the New Education Policy. The base has to be taken care of; it has to be absolutely strong; there are no two opinions about that and I am glad that since 1986, after the New Education Policy was adopted, we have had a lot of emphasis placed on the primary part of the education, the base of the pyramid. I am glad about it. In fact, earlier it was something like an inverted pyramid that we were working on. Now, that distortion has been corrected. But having said that, you cannot remain at the base; you have to go a little up because the education policy also talks about the pinnacle, the top of the educational pyramid. So, you just cannot remain stationary at the base, you have also to think of the top and unless you have the middle rungs properly worked out, properly taken care of, you just cannot achieve the excellence and the competence that the educational policy wants you to achieve at the top level.

The second part is a little more important and perhaps a little controversial. How do you start? Where do you end? How do you plan vocational education? Much has been said about it. We had commissions, committees going into this and what kind of vocational education, where do you start, what level of education you give and what is the need, what is really the requirement of India in terms of middle level technicians. Go to the Health Ministry; I was there for some time to find to my horror that we produce every year eight thousand nurses and thirteen thousand doctors in this country. Again a classic example of an inverted pyramid. You need thirty six thousand nurses if you have to stay-put at thirteen thousand doctors as today; you need, say about forty thousand nurses. Have we expanded the nurses' education? We haven't. We have stayed stationary at 8,000 or 9,000; maybe we will go up to 10,000. Now, I will have to see that in the Eighth Plan all this is changed. We cannot change it in one Plan obviously but we will have to see that this mismatch at the middle of the pyramid in education is taken care of at the earliest because by the end of the century you will find everyone a doctor but no one to serve him, no one to act as his assistant. I have examples where people came to me with requests for opening medical colleges, I dissuaded them because they were those who listened to me, I dissuaded them as Health Minister. Lo and behold; after my Ministry changed, they merrily got it.

So, if you stick to a policy throughout, then there will not be any trouble. Then educational institutions should not become a matter of prestige. You are dealing with the whole society. If the country needs doctors, let us have doctors. If the country needs IITs, let us have IITs. But we find the IIT boys hanging around in California because we are not able to give them jobs here, jobs commensurate with their skills and achievements. So, we have to have some relation with the needs of the country and at the level where the needs are most we will have to see even if it becomes an unpopular measure. I know that it is going to be an unpopular measure. If I hold on a little in respect of the highest part of education and if I put a little more money, more meat, in the lower parts, it is going to be not very popular in this country. But the Eighth Plan, I think, is the plan for unpopular measures, if necessary. It is going to be a plan for political will. If we buckle under these things and do not do what is due to the country, we will be failing in our duty. So, in the Eighth Plan we are looking into all these things and this Seminar has not come one day too early or too late; it has come exactly at the time when we are going to discuss the thrust areas of the Eighth Plan in the next two or three days.

So, I want you, I request you to go into all these things. Again, I feel a bit disappointed—why a bit, quite disappointed—about your CLASS Project (Computer Literacy and Studies in Schools). Now I did not expect the NCERT to let me down on this. This was the project which should not have been implemented like this. We could have given it to someone else but the NCERT wanted it. On a lot of matters, several matters, in the CLASS Project things went wrong. We tried to correct them and I understand that that correction process is still on. I left this Ministry three and a half years ago and still if the correctives that were suggested in my time remain unfulfilled or un-implemented, then I think this is a matter for some concern. You cannot miss out on the CLASS Project. You are punishing a generation. Please understand this. You may have two books less or three books more, but the NCERT has no business to let down a whole generation and make them illiterate in the only language that is going to be the language of the future, and that is, the computer language. You started on literacy and your illiteracy in computer continues. You started with 12,000 schools and now you are at 2,000. I think it is very inadequate. Some kind of special, some kind of a crash programme needs to be taken up. A whole generation has remained unequipped with the thing that is going to be very very important in their lives. So, please do something about it.

About teachers' education of course we have done so much, we have said so much. But I really wouldn't be able to make any comment without knowing all the details. I know what exactly we wanted to do but I do not know where the programme stands as of now. Maybe, I will have all these matters, all these reports, all these reviews sent to me and we will review it one of these days, but at least the CLASS Project should be taken care of.

So, we have to attend to the area in education which has not received attention qualitatively and quantitatively to the extent necessary. If this Seminar, apart from taking up primary or elementary education in general, girls' education of course which is an imperative as one of the main subjects, could specially take up the secondary part of education—and that part which really bristles with problems—I think we would be able to make use of your findings in the Planning Commission because this is the time when all new inputs have to come. Our education policy came at a wrong time. It came midway through the Seventh Plan. If it had come before the Seventh Plan, it would not have been languishing like this. Then the Eighth Plan is nowhere in sight. For two years we have been having only things called Annual Plans, which are no real Annual Plans, they are just a continuation. Now we are on the threshold of the Eighth Plan. You must fight for every rupee. This is what I am telling. If you don't fight, you will be left behind. So, I am prepared to be your ally because I have had this subject entrusted to me, I have been fighting, but there is always a limit beyond which the Prime Minister cannot go on fighting. Then, his soldiers have to fight, his commanders have to fight. So, you are the soldiers and you are commanders. The file should come from the institutions like the NCERT and I am prepared to accommodate to the extent possible but it should come in a very tangible and reasonable form so that the Planning Commission accepts it. Once the Planning Commission accepts, there is some hope for education. If you delay now, then you will not be able to correct the distortions later. This is the time when you have to put every ounce of your energy, everyone of you to put on your thinking caps and give us something which is concrete, which is useful, which is beneficial and which is prospectively imaginative enough to take care of the problems of education in the country.

Now, I do not want to read from the written speech, but anyway I think I have placed before you the gist of what I was supposed to say. I am convinced that this part of education needs immediate attention. Thank you very much and I would be very much interested to know what the outcome of this Seminar has been and how we could make use of it in the preparation of the Plan and later in implementing it.

The Best Possible Education to All

I AM PRIVILEGED to associate myself with this Special Convocation of the Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan. I hold in very high esteem and reverence Mother Teresa and Justice Hidayatullah. Justice Hidayatullah besides is my guru. He taught me law. So, when you find a flaw in my knowledge of law, you know whom to blame. Mother Teresa is a household name the world over. She has come to symbolise those noble qualities for which the human being is known to have been created in the image of the Lord. Mother Teresa has worked indefatigably in her own quiet way to relieve the distress of those who suffer. The example of Mother Teresa rekindles our faith in humankind.

Justice Hidayatullah has come to epitomise the best in the tradition of learning and jurisprudence. A humanist, a scholar and of pristine sincerity; for him, precept and practice merge into one, into a way of life. The example of Justice Hidayatullah strengthens our belief that wisdom and goodness have persisted in humankind despite all efforts to brutalise and irrationalise man.

It is indeed a befitting gesture on the part of Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan to have chosen to confer on Mother Teresa and Justice Hidayatullah the honorary membership of the Bhavan.

It is only appropriate that Bhavan has selected this occasion to release the writings of His Holiness Jagatguru Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, the Parmacharya of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham.

When we look at the life and work of Mother Teresa and Justice Hidayatullah, we notice that there is one quality which runs like a thread all through a deep and abiding concern for others. While all of us cannot be Mother Teresas or Justice Hidayatullahs, all of us can certainly do some good for others and work for the betterment of society. Perhaps, deep inside us we all do have this social concern except that in some it is more pronounced than in others. I know that not all people believe in this, but I for one believe in the innate goodness of the individual. I am also convinced that this goodness gives him the potential to be considerate towards his fellow beings.

When I said, all people don't necessarily believe in this, I am reminded here of the words of William Hazlitt, words which can dramatically question the point whether and to what extent a human being is capable of social concerns. He says: "The least pain in our little finger gives us more concern and uneasiness than the destruction of millions of our fellow beings". When you look around at first sight, this does seem to be the reality. But only apparently so. If you look a bit more deeply you come across many cases where service before self has been put to practice. True, these cases may not be as numerous as the kind portrayed by Hazlitt but they do set us thinking. These cases make the contrary point and perhaps as dramatically that there is an innate social concern in us all; it only required to be tapped.

To a very large extent education can play an important part in bringing out the best in the individual. The question, however, is what kind of education and what kind of 'best'. Of course, the accent on individual excellence is extremely important. Fostering a spirit of healthy competition is also important. In our old *gurukulas*, there was nothing like a 33 per cent pass. Either you were perfect or you were rejected. But should education stop at that? Should these constitute the limits of education? This question is of particular relevance today. Increasingly, we are witness to a phenomenon which can perhaps be described as anomie, a lack of a sense of purpose in the individual.

Technological and economic innovations have brought far reaching changes in their wake. The family ties, the social and kinship ties of old are disappearing without anything comparably protective taking their place. The individual finds himself in a unfamiliar situation quite without his moorings. In many ways, he is more alone and more vulnerable today than ever before and also more confused. That is perhaps the reason why we are witness to such an unbridled acquisitiveness—an acquisitiveness perhaps born out of insecurity. Many of those who do not succeed in the race for individual gain become apathetic to the social reality around them. Others turn cynical. Still others become tools in the hands of unscrupulous elements. Hence here is a situation in which the individual finds himself increasingly cut off from the social reality, increasingly oblivious of the joys and sorrows of his fellow beings. The challenge before modern education, of course, is to contribute towards accelerating scientific, technological and economic progress but a far greater challenge it faces is to find an answer to the increasing insensitivity of the individual. The challenge is to bridge the growing gap between the individual and the society.

Swami Vivekananda gave us some memorable words to remember. He said, "This life is short. The vanity in the world is transient. But they alone live who live for others. The rest are more dead than alive." Maybe only a few of us can live up to this dictum. Maybe, some of us can at best perform a balancing act and do no better. Be that as it may, Swami Vivekananda has re-emphasised an important fundamental truth—he has pointed to the need for a conscious effort on the part of the individual to preserve his organic link with society. The basic point is that you do have your joys and sorrows and you must look to them and take care of them but also remember that others do have their joys and sorrows and you must also partake of them.

The "Daridranarayan" of Gandhiji is a concept which is more pointed but in the same spirit. It focuses sharply on the need to make those less fortunate the very fulcrum of our thinking. The Mahatma's prescription or the famous talisman is too well-known by now to need further quotation. But this suggestion is both graphic and eminently practical. "Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Then you will find yourself, doubts melting away."

An important task before our educationists, therefore, is not only to evolve a system of education which promotes individual excellence but also one which promotes excellence in the individual as a part of society, which inculcates in a student in his formative years an adherence to a value system which lays a premium on utilising individual excellence for the good of the society, a value system which makes the point in no uncertain terms that the weak and the suffering must be the centre of our attention. This means nurturing a value system which transcends artificial, man-made barriers and encompasses the entire people in the warmth of its glow of love and compassion.

The Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan is doing a yeoman's service to the cause of education and you find that the value system it is trying to build is something any country, any society can be proud of.

Closely connected with the question of individual and society is the issue of using science and technology for human progress. The greater the distance of the individual from the society, the greater the danger of science and technology developing in an isolated manner bereft of any social responsibility. Panditji uttered this word of warning. In the mid-50s—as early as in the mid-50s I remember—his address to the Indian Science Congress in Hyderabad where contrary to all expectations, contrary to what we were all anticipating to hear from him, he said science and technology are

good but if they lose humanism then they will become terrible. In such a scheme of things cut off from the larger good, science and technology would at best be put to use for the benefit of just a few. Again he said this very early, very early before any of us ever thought of science and technology: "The aim of science and technology in India should be the betterment of the poorest of the poor." These were the words, the very words, he used. How perceptive! how prophetic! Today, we are making the same efforts in the same direction but not with any great success. So, we will have to think afresh of what we are doing to make science and technology serve man and not become the tools to enslave man.

This would indeed be a cruel paradox. The advances in science and technology in recent times have been so stupendous that they have opened up new vistas of progress and made it increasingly possible to improve the quality of life of those deprived millions living on the fringe of human existence. The point is when we make this happen or when we go in our own individual ways while allowing science and technology to meander of on their own and perhaps lead to so much friction, so much tension, so much inequality, that we do not need an atom bomb to destroy us; we will all destroy ourselves.

A striking example of the isolation of science and technology is the development of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. Smart weapons are becoming increasingly intelligent. One stage of weapons development is leading on to another. While disarmament is going on on the one hand, simultaneously the effort to make them smarter, to make them more and more destructive, even if fewer in numbers, is also going on the other, while millions of children in the world sleep over hungry stomachs. This is yet another area which education will have to address. In the minds of young scholars, science and technology must have a human face, a social face, science and technology must become synonymous with social good.

The question of being able to identify oneself with the social reality also depends in no small measure on the understanding an individual, his culture and heritage, of history, of his very roots and this is where Indian culture is the most humanising factor one could think of. It enjoins on everyone to think of the whole world as one family but then there is a rider there. The rider is *Udarcharitanam* to *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. It is not for everyone; you have to become the *Udarcharita* first; only then the whole world will be your family.

This is particularly important today because the accelerated pace of technological change is bringing in its wake tremendous social

changes and individual is in danger of losing his moorings and getting into a system which only fosters inequality and tension. There is a lot in our culture and heritage which is of permanent value and this is where the humanising and equalising factor of Indian culture comes in. It is a pity that while others are learning and are trying to imbibe, we are trying to reject it or maybe we are trying at best to be indifferent to it. Our students must be helped to imbibe the best from our age old traditions. Our links with the past will help us identify better with the social reality and retain our identity as a people . This will give us self-confidence to move purposefully into the future and cope with a fast changing world on terms of equality.

In this challenge we find the Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan a great help, a great aid, a great guide.

Needless to say, our system of education must embrace all our people if it has to have the desired effect. Yes, we must aim at excellence but let us not aim merely at creating centres of excellence surrounded by vast areas of apathy, neglect and mediocrity. Let us give the best possible education to all, let education itself become the bridge between different sections and different strata of our society. Let education become the bridge between the past and the present leading to a more humane future.

Man's Creativity Has No Limits

I AM PRIVILEGED to be in your midst to honour Professor Vinayak Krishna Gokak. The Jnanpith Award that has been conferred upon him, the words of admiration that have been showered, are of course a recognition of his outstanding contribution to Indian literature but they also betoken more. They are an offering of our gratitude to an eminent thinker, a distinguished poet and writer, one who has not only enriched the literature but also greatly enriched our lives. We are proud of him as Indians because he is one of us. We are proud of him because he belongs to the human family. We are filled with wonderment and pride at the depth of his thought and

Speech after presenting the Jnanpith Award to Professor Vinayak Krishna Gokak, Bombay, 1 November 1991

the sensitivity of his expression because they prove the point that man's creativity has no limits. This creativity, even while being the outpouring of the individual, does not belong to him alone; it belongs to all humankind.

Professor Gokak's writings reflect an imagination which knows no confines and are yet deeply contemplative of the existing reality and the truth which lies beyond. His works speak in an idiom which is surging and vibrant and yet also full of lyricism and gentleness. They reflect a mind which can encompass the vast sweep of history, the odyssey of human progress and also go deeply into the finest of fine nuances of emotions. They reflect a mind which can be engrossed in day-to-day human existence and yet be as deeply engrossed in the search for the eternal truth. In over six decades, beginning from his lyrical composition *Kalopasaka*, published in 1934, Professor Gokak has covered almost all fields of literary expression—poetry, novel, play and contemplative prose. He has, through these long years, reached out to subjects, thoughts and forms which make for great literature. On a personal plane, I recall that I became aware of his scholarly presence in 1939 when I joined the Fergusson College, Pune.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Bharatiya Jnanpith which has, over the years, succeeded in taking to the people the best of our contemporary literature. From the time when the Award was first instituted, Bharatiya Jnanpith has been able to build for Indian literature a national platform of excellence. Different languages, different regions share this platform and pay their tribute to excellence in literary endeavour, to excellence in one of the highest forms of human endeavour. In the process they become aware of one another and get integrated into the indivisible heritage of Indian literature.

This sharing of a common platform is of course important from the point of view of all Indian languages. What is equally important and of historical significance from the point of view of our national life is that this is a striking confirmation of the fact that through myriad cultures and languages, India is one. For nine years, I have been reading the best in Indian literature. When we had to give an award it was not as though only one work was being read. We had to read dozens and dozens of books literally, at least browse through them. I have found, I have discovered to my own pleasant surprise that whichever language the writer was writing in, the poet was writing in, what he really wanted to say, answers only one description and that is eminently Indian. You can't describe it by any other word. That is why we have said some times about Indian literature, while you go from place to place what changes is the

language but not the mind, not the genius. It is Indian throughout, from start to finish. *Boli Badalti Hai, Baat Nahin Badalti*. This is what we have found everytime. Excellence in literary endeavour, whatever be the language, is a matter of pride for the entire country, for all its people. Excellence in any field of human endeavour, in any part of the country is a matter of pride for us all.

Literature has a special place in our lives. It is our faithful companion in the quest for a more meaningful, more purposeful life. It brings to us the experience which everyone may not have had, and yet which is extremely important for one's inner development and growth, for evolving into a more complete individual and a better one. It is a nursery for the full flowering of the human spirit and personality. It nurtures all that is humane. It keeps alive the will to strive for the better, for the higher. The role of literature has always been of great importance but is of particular relevance today, at a time when scientific development has opened new vistas of progress, and technological and economic changes have also deeply affected social mores and relationships. The protective cover of the family and the cohesive ties of the society are becoming increasingly nebulous, without anything comparably reassuring and warm taking their place. The individual is more lonely today than ever before, and more vulnerable. And more confused. He is in a state of anomie, lacking a sense of purpose. He is in danger of wandering into a situation where he becomes oblivious of the larger purposes of life. He is engaged only in the fulfilment of his material wants. This, by itself is normal, but it tends to become the sole obsession through a daunting process of competition and conflict. What worsens the struggle is the compulsive trend to judge one's lot not on its own merit, but always in relation to the other fellow. The impact of this perpetual rat race could perhaps be mitigated by literature which inculcates detachment through identification with persons and situations created by the writer.

We have seen people watching Ramayana. We have seen in small villages where these performances are nightlong, people come after their dinner keeping their children at home or bringing them along with a small bed to make them sleep. In our areas, this is very common. You feel that every man or woman who is congregated there has forgotten his or her trials, tribulations, life, chores, everything. You see tears, not glycerine tears, real tears flowing from every eye in those hundreds of people who are witnessing the show. If you are a big scholar, you will be able to find ten mistakes in every sentence uttered by the actors and

actresses because it is a street show. But you look at the audience and you feel ashamed of yourself that you are not able to appreciate it. This has happened to me, so I am relating this personal experience to you. They are real as long as he watches them; they are absolutely real. But eventually one has to admit that they are unreal at the same time. Literature, therefore, has a dual role for one who reads it. It rescues him from himself, if he happens to be an escapist. In case he is a doer, it reorients him and shores up his fighting qualities. It can reintroduce him to those eternal truths which he seems to have lost somewhere along the road to progress, but those upon which rests the very purpose of human existence and salvation. As the poet says in “The Book of a Hundred Autumns” in *Bharata Sindhu Rashmi*:

“Man’s life flows not like rivers, without end,
Death brings no light, if living has no aim.”

The literature of Professor Gokak who is being honoured today, has at its core the vision of *samanvaya*, harmony. Whether it is in the coming together of the literary traditions of the East and the West; whether it is antiquity or the modern predicament; whether it is situations and emotions which are as seemingly antithetical as they are varied—different streams and strands interact in the writings of Professor Gokak and the vision of life that emerges is more complete, closer to the truth. The high point of this spirit of *samanvaya* is reached in his magnum opus *Bharata Sindhu Rashmi*.

This *samanvaya*, however, has not come easily or quickly. I am sure he will testify to this. Behind it there has been a long lifetime of agonising reflection. This is evident from the following passage from the “Rashmi”:

“Generations have churned the ocean of Time and received wondrous gifts. O, our misfortune! For us, the churning has provoked poison. Flames have enveloped the world and nowhere is visible the blue-throated poison-drinking god, the Neelakantha. Pigmy nations are crossing swords with giants and nowhere is a saviour visible. Pretenders to wisdom, attracted to the thralldom of the senses, collect a palmful of sea foam and drink salt water, deeming it nectar. There are star-lovers who, ignoring the Polar Star, are thrilled by meteors and comets. Immersed in the study of the minutiae of yogic lore, there are seekers who forget that their search is for Truth. They are lost in a maze unable to recognise the supreme simplicity of Truth. The plodders doing their mechanical tasks have poisoned our meat and drink and our daily living. Our leaders uphold the flag of one religion, race, class,

caste, or the other. They are perfect poison-mongers (That is the description of some of us.) The philosophy of the seven sunbeams co-ordinates and reconciles contraries. It is an antidote to Dithi's conspiracy of division and conflict. Hence this epic, the lustrous essence of the lives of great seers, illuminers of mind and harbingers of harmony. The layman and the scholar will both thrill to it."

This is the agonising conflict which has brought out this epic. I have had very little time—literally a part of one half—wakeful night—to read a bit of the very inadequate English paraphrase of *Bharata Sindhu Rashmi*. It would be unfair for me to make any comment, based on this very brief reading. But the theme reminded me of Jai Shankar Prasad's *Kamayani*. After a long time, I lost myself in the Vedic World. I felt that *Rashmi* deals with the wider and more complex matrix of interaction and integration. It brings out the fascinating story of the building of a nation, through blood, love, life-style. The building blocks are from the Rig Veda. They are not too many, but the poet's phenomenal imagination makes every word of the epic appear to emanate from Vedic lore. The sweep is indeed breathtaking.

Like all other epics, *Rashmi* contains numerous facets—you know, he doesn't have all the unities that are prescribed in literature, neither Ramayana has, nor Mahabharata—and they are not necessarily inter-connected, yet, making up a whole that is greater than the sum total of its parts. Each facet, however, has its own charm—and truth. I was struck, for instance, by the following passage:

"He ventured again on another topic. Religions are in conflict with each other. Why not cultivate a universal religion and eliminate all conflicts? Vishwamitra said:

Unity lies, not in religions, but in the spiritual outlook. You would like to be my master and teach me the universal religion..My own inner insight is my master in spirit. The only Guru I have is God Himself."

How contemporary all these sound, although it was Vishwamitra who spoke those words.

And yet, the poet—rather the seer in the poet—has not lost hope. He says:

"Declared has the Supreme:

Man shall come round serenely in the end.

His own misdeeds will humble him with stumbling.

In his own error are involved the steps

That help him to evolve towards the Throne
 And sit, one day, anointed, near the High.
 Man was born God-like, innocent and pure.
 And he knew beauty day by day through Sense.
 But fiends allured him with the Golden Deer,
 Enslaved his kind with the spell of Name and Form
 And foothold gave in their dominion.
 To save man from this plight, I, the Supreme,
 Breathed Sacrifice into his daily life
 And built the fire-altar. But ignorance
 Mantra turned to magic, Word to words.
 In a world marbled with ingratitude
 O, I came down in clay. I showered love.
 'The Avatar is here !' some cried."

This, even as an English rendering—what it could be in the original you can imagine—is really something great, something which touches every heart.

He also pours a bit of poetic scorn on the *dramatis personae* of contemporary life, their follies and their foibles:

"It was great fun. I watched it for a while.
 In an infinite zero the Nihilist lost his way.
 Philosophers called me a hermaphrodite.
 Feminists,—woman and others a neuter noun.
 Each capped me his own way till all were trapped.
 The Materialists's Gross as the root of all the subtle;
 The Humanist's Man as yardstick of the yard;
 The Existentialist's prowl both day and night
 For golden particles glistening in sand;
 With aching sense, the Epicurean's search
 Only for crumbs in Life's most gorgeous banquet;
 The Man of Reason and the Socialist
 Pleased with a little when Life gifts the whole:
 All these revealed the intermediate darkness
 With which the ego eclipses, day or night
 The plangent journeys of the planetary soul,
 Many worship the Manifold, not the One.

They strike for unity, forgetting the Supreme.
 Integral living remains a broken image,
 When they move through the world, or tribes
 through jungles;
 It does not tingle, mingle in their blood.

However, having said all this, I must add that like all other epics, *Rashmi* also deals with the age-old theme of good and evil. Commentators have noted, rightly, that it depicts the ultimate triumph of good over evil. How “ultimate” is the triumph? If it is in the long run, how long is the run? Or is it mere wishful thinking? If in the short run Evil is seen as triumphant, at least those who are impatient surely are justified in adopting Evil, aren’t they? How does one meet this logic of the impatient? And if this is a world of velocity, where instantaneity is the name of the game, who would prefer to wait until the ultimate long triumph of the Good? These are the questions for poets, philosophers and social engineers to answer.

Meanwhile, everyone admires and adores the epic and the epic-maker Gokak.

Now, to conclude. For those who find the Good versus Evil theme endless, and perhaps a bit inconclusive, I have another profound theme to offer. Many of us have been in public life for more than fifty years now. We have been working, at the same time contemplating. Both processes have gone hand in hand and perhaps some of us have gathered a lot of, I can’t say wisdom, but a lot of fancy, something which we think we should express at some point of time. Fifty years is not a small period. We have been taking lessons from our leaders, leaders of the freedom movement; we have been in the movement. We have come to some conclusions, tentative, but conclusions nevertheless. Today those conclusions seem to be under attack, I have been feeling about it for the last two, three years and perhaps the values that we had more or less developed through service, through work, are under attack. They are being questioned. I have another profound theme to offer. That is also as ancient as man but has assumed a compelling significance right now, as I told you. The theme is the Individual versus the Collective. I shall put the question tersely. It has been established that the ruthless suppression of individual genius and initiative doesn’t, indeed cannot, lead to the collective good. But the question is does the unlimited interplay of individual interests necessarily lead to the common good. Where is the line to be drawn? This is the question which we will have, the coming generations will have to answer and that is why I am bringing it here because some

permanent questions have been raised in this epic. Again, Indian culture does have a *samanvaya* to the question. This is really what I wanted to say to this question, to this new question, which is really going to plague the world of tomorrow. India alone has an answer. But more thought and action need to be centered round it the world over. Besides, the *samanvaya* seems to be getting blurred, now tending towards one side, now towards the other. Some great poet-seer is needed to retrieve *samanvaya* here, before “fiends allure him with Golden Deer”, to borrow Prof. Gokak’s beautiful description.

Will some Jnanpith Laureate unravel the Golden Deer and save humanity—and its sanity. That is my wish. That is my hope.

Education Should Foster Universal Values

THIS HALLOWED INSTITUTE—Sri Satya Sai Institute of Higher Learning—is a pioneering and unique seat of learning. Spiritual and ethical values permeate the process of education here. Baba’s emphasis on the five eternal, universal values of *Satya*, *Dharma*, *Shanti*, *Prema* and *Ahimsa* are truly secular in character and constitute the bedrock of all major religions of the world. The atmosphere here is calm, solemn, serene and surcharged with spiritual ethos. It is in such an environment that the ancient *Rishis* transmitted knowledge to their disciples. It is for this reason that I feel happy to be here today to address the graduates of this university.

The importance of value education has been repeatedly stressed by several Commissions and Committees on university and higher education in India. The National Policy of Education 1986, to which my Government is committed and which I had the good fortune to be involved in fashioning out to some extent, emphasises that in our culturally plural society education should foster universal and eternal values oriented towards unity and integration of our people.

Such value education should help eliminate obscurantism, religious fanaticism, violence, superstition and fatalism.

There has been growing concern over the erosion of essential values. There is also a growing realisation that there is need for radical restructuring in the curriculum to enable education to become a forceful tool for the cultivation of social and moral values and for the promotion of a holistic personality which is the bedrock of all oriental philosophies. We do not look at man in bits and pieces, in ours and theirs; we take a holistic view and we believe that the whole is much more than the arithmetical sum total of all its parts.

Our education policy also visualises value education which is based on our heritage, national goals and universally accepted values. Education policy, however, well thoughtout is likely to remain a pious declaration of mere aspirations unless we show firm determination to implement it. Indeed, a purely intellectual discussion of values in the classroom as part of the syllabus is not adequate for the value orientation of the students. The practice of those values in day to day life by the teacher and students throughout their lives would alone testify to the completion of education. The one area where there can be no gap between the precept and practice is value oriented education. Unless the teacher himself is a living embodiment of values, how can he carry the conviction with his students. As Sri Satya Sai Baba has said, education does not mean getting the know-how of the alphabet. What is learnt has to be practised and shown in your daily life, thereby sanctifying your life. You must try to understand the inner purpose of life. Misconceived and misunderstood notions of modernity and the requirements of scientific age have posed a great threat to our values. With modernisation comes better communication that bridges the gap between people; but traditional values of a small, closely knit society which demands co-operation, loyalty and interdependence often gets eroded and people tend to ignore these values. A conscious effort will have to be made to stop this erosion. The inculcation of the right blend of values is perhaps in today's context the most challenging and daunting task for any educator. We have to reinforce our traditional values while at the same time coping with the requirements of a modern society. Our institutes of higher learning must bring about a blend between traditional values and modern knowledge. Giving up your traditional values amounts to cutting away the roots of the trees. You must preserve the traditional values but assimilate them with modern techniques and science.

The preoccupation with modern technology cannot be allowed to sever our new generations from the roots in India's history and culture. I am glad that this Institute is trying to achieve this blend between traditional values and modern scientific knowledge. The Science Departments are well-equipped. In fact, they are better equipped than in many other universities one can come across. The Centre for Computer Science established at the Prasanti Nilayam Campus compares with the best of computer science in other educational institutions of our country.

Now, this is a real blend between science and spirituality. The synthesis I was talking about, the synthesis for which Indian thought stands, we do not stand for halfbaked knowledge. Either we are full or nothing. There is nothing like 30 per cent pass in Indian philosophy and Indian learning. So, through this, the students are motivated to strive for perfection in the physical, intellectual as well as the spiritual spheres.

Universities are centres for imparting knowledge. In the Indian tradition, knowledge is wisdom and not mere intellectual attainment or competence. Value oriented education alone can realise the basic aim of higher education. As Mahatma Gandhi said, an education which does not teach us to discriminate between good and evil, to assimilate the one and eschew the other, is a misnomer.

India's political and social life is passing through a phase which poses a danger of erosion of long accepted values. We are able to see this even as we watch all this going on even as we regret it. Secularism, democracy, national unity, professional ethics and other cherished values are coming under increasing strain. Vigorous and pace-setting programme is needed for implementation in all our universities and colleges.

I realise that this is a task that is easier said than done. Today India has one of the largest systems of higher education in the world. Facilities for higher education have grown rapidly since Independence. The number of universities has increased from 25 at the time of Independence to 177 at present and the number of colleges from 700 to nearly 7,000. Student enrolment which was only two lakhs in 1947 is now more than 42 lakhs. This then is the magnitude of the task before us. The task is to transform this huge, massive structure of higher education from one where values are completely lost to one where values are completely cherished. The task is absolutely stupendous and if there is a small glimmer of hope, it comes from institutions like this. We would like to take this glimmer from here. I want my colleague, Mr. Arjun Singh, who heads the Ministry of Human Resource Development to examine, to go deeper into this and see how

this transformation can take place because transform we must, there is no other way. This then is the magnitude of the task before us. And, still there is no use of getting taunted by the magnitude. We have to make a beginning somewhere and that somewhere is here.

There are two areas that immediately come to my mind where reforms can be introduced across the system within a rigid time frame, which would have a tangible impact on the direction of establishing a value oriented education. One is the area of curriculum reform. You all know we have been attempting this with some result but perhaps much more needs to be done. As part of the implementation of the NPE 1986, the University Grants Commission has issued guidelines for restructuring of courses which provide for foundation courses at the first degree level. These courses are designed to create an awareness of the cultural dimension of the country including our cultural and social history and other aspects essential to nurture national identity and national integration. The growth of spiritual and moral ideas must find a place in these courses. These elements should be designed to inculcate in the students values such as egalitarianism, democracy and secularism, equality of sexes, scientific temper and removal of social barriers. The synthesis of science and spirituality and the blending of material prosperity with universal human values should be duly emphasised in the context of education.

The other equally important areas is examination reform. As I said, in the Indian way of thinking there is no such thing as a 30 per cent pass. We have to aim at perfection and there is no escape from that. The system as it exists today, apart from being based on mediocrity, is itself contributing to the decline in moral values. Now, this is the most unfortunate part of it. It is bedevilled by the evil practices such as cheating in examinations, leakage of examination papers which is also sometimes happening in the Union Public Service Commission, laxity in evaluation, collusion by a section of teachers themselves and even the threat of violence in examination halls. These practices need to be checked and eliminated to far-reaching examination reforms. Policing will not do. I repeat, policing methods will not do. It is the more intelligent, more comprehensive, more perceptive methods of examination that can do away with these malpractices and nothing short of that. Unless we do this, we cannot arrest the further deterioration of moral values and concomitantly the deterioration in the quality and standards of education.

These are only two areas which I have cited at random but if we make the beginning somewhere and if these two areas are taken

up for intensive work in reform, I am sure that other areas will also have some fall out from the reform that we attempt in these areas. We would like to go into the actual implementation of the National Education Policy.

While we were making the Policy, we had the good fortune of the benefit of opinions, views, guidance taken from Sri Satya Sai Baba's Institute. Professors and others were good enough to come and talk to me in Delhi. We sent our people here and we had a good amount of consultation but somehow I feel that all that needed to be incorporated in the Policy was not incorporated. We would like to supplement what we have done before. This institution has already justified its existence. For the last ten years it has been working and what we knew about it in 1985 was far less than what we know about it today. So, we would like to supplement what we have done in 1985 by learning more from the working of this institution, more from studying the alumni of this institution, more from the methods followed in this institution hereafter. I am sure that all those who have had the privilege of having been the students of this institution shall not only receive complete education but will prove to be, above all, good human beings.

On this occasion, on this very happy occasion which comes only once or twice in the life of a graduate, I would like to congratulate the graduates, those who have received their degrees and enjoin on them to be true to the pledge that they have taken: it is something which needs to be repeated, repeated everyday within oneself like a *japa* so that whenever you go wrong this comes to your mind and brings you light. I have great pleasure in meeting the students and I wish the Institute, its faculty and its students even greater success in the years to come.

Strengthen Navodaya System

I AM INDEED very happy to have the opportunity of meeting you, not so much as an interaction, which I would have preferred much more, but even as limited contact just to reassure myself that what was started some years ago is still indeed going from strength to strength. This is a very happy feeling.

This is not a very longstanding institution but anyone who has seen it—and I have shown it to many people across the globe, and the Navodaya Note has travelled far and wide beyond the shores of India. I may inform you, everyone who has read through the note, everyone who has even a smattering of what education should be, has sent very warm messages saying that this is something which is unique. If only authorities in charge of education could combine these features in one institution as has been done in the case of the Navodaya Vidyalayas, education would indeed become a holistic programme, a programme for life. Now, each characteristic which you find in this institution, taking it by itself, is not new, you have residential schools, you have the three-language-formula, you have all kinds of things, but the combination is what is unique in this institution.

I remember in the 50s, in the early stages of the Community Development Programme, we were told about many items of the programme—irrigation water, good seed, pesticides, good agriculture methods etc., five or six parameters and everytime we were told that if you have good seed there will be an improvement of 10 per cent in the yield; if you have irrigation water, you will have 50 per cent increase in the yield; if you have the use of pesticides then the yield on the whole will be 15 per cent more and so forth. So, no one told us, however, that if all these things are applied to the same plot only then the yield will come, otherwise they don't come; you may have water but if you don't have good seed, nothing will come; if you have seed but if you don't use pesticides again everything will go.

So, that is how all these good parameters have been experimented in schools but they have not given us the desired result because the combination was just not there. There was no choosing of brilliant children from the villages, so the idea of social justice was non-existent to start with. There was no idea of giving free education, including to and fro bus charges to these children, so it became an expensive education to start with. So, every item has been experimented, has been present in some other system, but not all the items and that is one of the unique features of this institution. Of course, you have been running the institution, so I don't have to tell you what it is. But I have been thinking about.

In fact, I may tell you that when my portfolio changed from Human Resource Development to External Affairs while I was in Sofia as Minister for HRD for the Indo-Bulgarian Festival, the portfolio was changed by about 2 a. m (Bulgaria Time) and I was told that from the next moment I was going to be a Foreign Minister. So, I woke up as Foreign Minister. The news travelled

there by about 9 or 10 in the morning, by that time their Ambassador had told them. I had only one regret that I was leaving behind one baby which perhaps needed a little more care, a little more tending and I did not know what would happen to this baby. Fortunately, it has been allowed to grow on the lines on which it was started and I am happy to find that nothing untoward happened, what they call the *Balarishta* has not struck the institution.

There are some areas which need to be specially attended to. That has been my opinion right from the beginning. It is not that the institution will not run, it will run; everything that starts will run, at least to take care of the salaries it will run, but that is not running according to me. What is running is not running exactly as it ran last year. I have to find the improvement, the sharpening, the refining, from year to year. That is what we mean by running, running well. So, I had some areas of doubt, areas in which I had misgivings and I thought areas that needed very special care.

As you all know, this method of migration of 20 per cent students which can be taken as a very special feature of this scheme, I had my doubts whether it would work. Then the three-language-formula—when a language other than his own is being taught to the student, whether this would work, whether the three-language-formula would work and how you make it work. This was one of the points of worry. I hope it is working .

I had gone to Amethi for electioneering. When I reached there, I got all the students lined up and I asked them what is their third language. This was the first question; only the third language. They said Malayalam. I was quite happy about it. I said “Do you understand Malayalam, can some of you speak Malayalam?” They said “Yes.” I did not have time to examine them because I had to attend an election meeting. But I was happy at least when the children told me and I don’t think that these children were old enough to learn to lie. So, I immediately took their words as true and I was quite happy.

Now, there is something more you can do. You can take these children, the children who have learnt Malayalam, for a month to Kerala. Let them live among families there, let them know something not only about the language but also about the area in which this language is spoken. That is what they do in the language studies at the higher level; it is not just the language that is taught, it is the history and culture of the people speaking the language. Now, this needs to be done. It is not going to be very expensive because the people of Kerala or Andhra, Tamil Nadu, will be only too glad to make arrangements for the stay of these boys. They

can live with families, they are just like their own children. So, this has to be done, not only migration of students but also students to stay with families in the area whose language they have had the opportunity to learn in the Navodaya Vidyalayas. This means greater amount of interaction and insight. The child becomes a little more aware of India as a result of this experience. I would like you to try this.

Then the other area where I had a little misgiving was the introduction of the vocational stream. I still don't know what is being done. But again the idea was that the Navodaya Vidyalayas should not be just a sort of intellectual exercise or only by reading and writing, but it should have the component of training. When I left the Ministry, it was too much in the early stages and that had not been worked out, it was more or less in the embryonic form. So, I didn't know what was to be done. We were just having some vague ideas. So, I would like to say that this also is a very important component and this component has to be supplied at the earliest. You have to have the investment made in the Vidyalayas for this kind of a thing, plus computers: give them a short course in CAD/CAM (Computer Aided Designs/Computer Aided Mechanics). It will be very useful to them and I am sure they will do wonderfully well. They will do better than a grown up engineer at the IIT who uses CAD/CAM for the first time. Why not? I don't see any reason why it should not be used. It does not cost a fortune. I think you have to do it. I don't know whether computers have been introduced. Just don't restrict them to the CLASS programme. That will be too small for these boys and girls. They will get fed up with these games and this programme very soon. So, give them something more challenging and that can come through designing. Designing is infinite. Literally infinite. There is no limit to which the boys' imagination need go, it can go to any limit. That kind of a thing, the challenge that is given to the boys. More than the teaching it is the challenge where he himself has to work, find the answers, think. So, this is a programme which I think you should do alongwith the vocational stream.

Then, what Arjun Singhji has just mentioned is very very relevant. This school must have a programme of interaction with neighbouring schools. What is the distance within which you call two neighbouring schools depends on conditions. It may be within 20,30,40 or 50 miles, or whatever. But you must have a regular programme. This cannot be allowed to grow as an elite school in a sea of mediocrity. This was not the idea at all. It was a pace-setting institution. It has to be a pace-setting institution.

The fourth and I think the most important about which I was genuinely worried was the quality of teachers. I visited quite a few schools. I have nothing against the teachers in principle. But the point is that it was just not enough for the kind of boys and girls you are going to get; they are the top rungs of intellect available in the country; you are casting your net far and wide to the remotest corner of India, to the remotest village in the district. We don't know how intelligence spreads. Maybe that is god's gift. You get people in all kinds of places. So, the teacher will have to learn more than the student in the ultimate analysis. When a system starts functioning in the first five or ten years it is the teacher who has to learn more. To my sorrow I came to know that the very wholesome, practical methods of taking teachers on deputation has been done away with and you have permanent recruitment. I have no objection to recruitment but I am still not very convinced that this will work, work not in the sense of teacher being there and doing his duty, whatever it is, but the freshness of this institution being maintained, I am doubtful about that. Someone will have to look deeper into this, tell me what is happening. I am not asking for all the changes. But the point is why was it changed is something which is not quite clear to me. Anyway, this is one of the areas I was worried about and my worry continues.

Now, after two years of wobbling, no one seems to agree with anything in education. It is my scheme, therefore, it has to close with me. That kind of thing has been happening, this over-experimentation in education and when the Governments changed I thought that this has also struck this scheme. And it did strike the scheme. But now something good has happened and the scheme has come to stay. I hope it has come to stay.

We will complete the scheme, the original scheme of one for each district. I am not sure we will be able to go beyond that, may be to make it two for each district or three for two districts. But from Government funds, public funds, how much we can do, given the overall constraint of funds in the Eighth Five Year Plan, I cannot say. But I can say this much that the original scheme will be completed. That still leaves some doubt in my mind that this scheme will not strike roots everywhere. And someone can say "O, we are spending too much, scrap it." Now, this has to go into another channel, a parallel channel, where it has to be picked up. The schools that are only aided, running under private management; in the first two years a lot of people came and asked me. I said, "No, let us do it by ourselves in the first instance. When it gets stabilised, we will think of expanding it into other channels." I think that you will have to make this scheme permanent,

unchangeable, that means nobody will tamper with it. So, it is to go into those channels. But then you will have to adopt the same and adopt the channels, both. They cannot accept it as it is. But at the same time you cannot sacrifice the essentials of the scheme. Now this is something which needs to be properly examined and I don't see why if there is a good scheme, a non-Government institution should not take it up. There is nothing like a copyright. But you must insist that they take it up with all essentials intact; they cannot erode any of the essentials. So, this again you will have to examine, the Ministry has to examine, somebody has to examine whether this could be done. I would be happy if this is done because this gives some kind of roots, strength to the roots of the institution and later on it will not be easy to remove it. It is not going to be easy to give this kind of quality in every high school in India; it is not just conceivable. So, whether one agrees or does not agree, the point is that this scheme at least has the merit of giving full opportunity to intellect, to talent, wherever it exists, by bringing out that talent into an institutional framework where it could blossom. Now, this you don't have in any other system. Therefore, this one characteristic is enough on the basis of social justice, on the basis of excellence for all who deserve it. Pick up excellence from wherever you have it, from wherever you get it. Now, this has to remain and also the other characteristics, the base characteristics. If it strikes root, if it is allowed to or enabled to strike roots in the society, then it will be all to the good.

Now, these are some of the areas in which I had some doubts, I had some misgivings, I thought I could share them with you so that in the months and years to come as you go along apart from the new problems that would be thrown up about which you would be knowing better, I am not aware of them from distance, but if there are any problems I would be ready to solve them, sit with you and look into them, but the problems which I thought would have to be attended to are the ones that I have just described. I hope it will be possible for us to sort these problems out and Plan after Plan, it will be possible for us to strengthen this system, the Navodaya system, for the good of all the coming generations.

I thank you very much for this opportunity. I tell you once again that I am always open for any discussion, for any new ideas coming from any quarter, in order to improve this scheme, in order to strengthen this scheme.

Our Heritage Has a Staying Power

I AM GLAD that the Ministry of Human Resource Development on behalf of the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund have organised this exhibition on the theme of the “Values for New India”. This theme is a fitting commemoration of Pandit Nehru’s birth anniversary.

Panditji saw no conflict between a scientific approach and the preservation of India’s ancient culture and values. In fact, for him science was a search for truth and an aid to development. This theme is specially relevant for the new generation. The inculcation of the right blend of values imbibing the scientific temper of this age and our traditional values will enable the new generation to effectively contribute to the building of new India. I am glad that the Ministry of Human Resource Development have brought together the contributions being made by the scientific community and other agencies towards nation building. The exhibition also focuses on children and on the basic problem of illiteracy confronting this nation.

As it is, we are speaking about the exhibition before seeing it—a peculiar way we organise our meetings. But that is how it is. We have heard so much about values. We have given very great importance to value-based education in the New Education Policy. We are all convinced about it. There is no question of arguing about it any longer. But the problem is how do we go about doing it. That is the practical aspect and that is where most of our attempts, even if they do not lack in sincerity, have not really given us the results that we expected. Now, is it possible to change an individual if you catch him young and give him a particular type of education? The answer could be yes; the answer in some cases could be no.

In Mahabharata, we know that the same teacher taught the Kauravas and the Pandavas. Though while skill-wise they were on par, individually speaking, the manner in which their lives were shaped, it is impossible to believe that the same Dronacharya was their common teacher. Now, this happens to every teacher. The

Speech while inaugurating the exhibition on "Values for New India", on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Jawaharlal Nehru, New Delhi, 14 November 1991

same teacher can be very proud of being the teacher of very high personality, highly placed personality and quite a few teachers go on claiming this without of course going into the other aspect of how their other pupils have turned out to be. That record is perhaps not possible with them. So, all we can do is to do our duty by giving them the value-based education.

I have heard Dr. Karan Singh and many other scholars, Panditji included—in fact he started the debate early in the 1950s about two subjects which seem to be quite different but they are not different—science and spirituality, science and the humanities. We have to understand that these are not different, these are manifestations of the same but they look different because they are looked after by different people with different talents and with different approaches. If it had not been for the *Atharvaveda*, much of your science would have been lost. So, if the same Vedas can have spirituality and science integrated into them, there is little point in arguing whether you want science or spirituality. We want both. That is obvious. And, we cannot have the one without the other. That is the link between them. We want this to be understood.

We have so much of folklore in this country which is very entertaining. Boys and girls, women, even old women, sing these songs with great pleasure, excitement. But if you go a little deeper into the texts of those songs, you will find that there is the science of medicine built into them. Our languages are so beautiful, so much capable of giving you different meanings, I am not sure any other country could think of such an expression, such a form of expression, which gives you entertainment of the highest order on the one side and education of the highest order on the other, a very intricate subject being presented in poetic form in the easiest of terms.

By the way we all know that all literature started with poetry. Whether it is science, whether it is even mathematics, all these were expressed in beautiful poetry to start with and that is how the heritage has been remembered generation after generation for thousands of years. It is not possible to remember prose as you know. You can't even repeat it; the second time you repeat it, it becomes different. But the scientific method by which a text can be preserved over the centuries, what they call the *Ghana* the *Jata*, where is the intonation to be raised, where it is to be lowered, what is the position of the tongue in relation to the roof of the mouth in order to produce a particular sound. Now, this is another science. Many people do not know that this science was perfected in this country long long time ago. And, when you

find people pronouncing things wrongly, differently, what you have to blame is the position of the tongue in that particular part of the mouth touching the wrong part on the wrong point in the cavity of the mouth which produces the wrong sound. To this extent our people went into scientific research analysing everything that there is to analyse.

You have the *Bramhapurana*, you have the *Vishnupurana*, you have the Universe coming from sound. That is one philosophy pronounced. You have another philosophy taking the origin of the Universe—maybe many universes—to something totally different. In fact, there is a lot of healthy competition between the advocates of *Agnipurana* and the advocates of *Vayupurana*. This is the kind of inquiry that went into our heritage for thousands of years. So, there is no dichotomy at all between the two; science is a part of your culture. You will never think of culture without the scientific part being woven into it very integrally; not like a different lesson, not like a separate teacher teaching it. No. It is all one, all integrated into one.

Maybe, that is the answer where you talk in terms of one versus the other. This is not our approach. The Indian approach is that you take a holistic view, where every part falls in its place and harmonises with the other parts. I am not sure about the Western approach but I have been told that this is the analytical approach, where you separate the things and then put them together. Ours is the holistic approach, the oriental approach, whether it is here or in China or in any of the countries of the orient. The approach is that life is one and life as a whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Now, that is where that invisible dimension which makes the whole greater than or bigger than the sum of its parts, the arithmetical sum of its parts that comes in and perhaps that accounts for what we generally talk in terms of metaphysics in terms of spirituality that which you cannot quantify. So, all this is the sum of total of life. All this is the approach to the holistic aspect of life as we understand it.

How do we inculcate this into the children? How do we produce this as a text book? How do people understand this? How do they translate it into action? Now, this is the applicational aspect which you will find very much more difficult even to formulate. The question of implementing it comes later; even to formulate is going to be difficult.

That is why if I can think of one chapter in the New Education Policy which has defied so far, what could reasonably called a correct definition or correct formulation, it is that part which deals with value-based education.

A few days before I was invited to open a University in Puttaparthi. There were great scholars, top scholars in this country who had done everything for education. They were all congregated there to go into the basics of value education. It is not everyone that can do that. They have had a life time given to education. They are all retired. But somehow they felt that all this long service for the cause of education has been rather incomplete. They want to complete it if there is any element that can complete it. While we were formulating the Policy, we had called some of them, we had discussed with some of them, but we did not have time to go into all the aspects. We only put in the Education Policy what could be called a general formulation. Now, we have to go into the nitty-gritty and I do not think that there is going to be one answer to this question or one methodology to this question. Maybe it will depend on the principal of the college, maybe, it will depend upon the headmaster of the school how he inculcates this. There is no text book for this. There cannot be a text book for this.

Therefore, we are embarking on something very exciting, probably very confusing in the beginning, but somehow this culture, this heritage has a staying power which falls in place, it will get into the consciousness of the people on its own with a little help from those who are in charge. I am very optimistic about this part of the education policy. But we have to go a long way in bringing about it.

Towards Even Development

IT GIVES me much pleasure to be here in your midst today. It is our lot to labour the whole day but the task which has drawn me here today is a very pleasant one. It is a pleasure to come to this place. For, one, it is the soil where industry has prospered. A big industry has come up where there was nothing before. When we visit this place we feel how much better it would have been for us if there were a hundred or two hundred Jamshedpurs in the country. Jamshedpur reminds us of Jamshedji Tata—a single individual who could accomplish so much by sheer will-power and courage. You

English rendering of the Hindi speech at the inauguration of the First Rajiv Gandhi International (Under 21) Invitation Football Tournament, Jamshedpur, 12 January 1992

can see an example of it here. We hope that the new generation, our youth, will imbibe that spirit and would throw up a few Jamshedjis.

India stands today on the threshold of new achievements and fresh progress. The morale is high. The country is poor but we are not victims of the poverty of mind. It is essential that we make a firm resolve today, a resolve which we will not allow to be weakened and from which we will not retreat. Our resolve should be to march forward, no matter how many storms we have to face, there is, in fact, no scope for retreat.

I am here today on the occasion of this tournament. It is a tournament for the youth. Even otherwise, all tournaments are for the young but this one is specially for the youth below 21 years and it is named after Rajivji. As you know, Rajivji took a great deal of interest in the affairs of the youth. He showed much interest in sports and the amount of money which the Government devoted to sports programmes during his tenure as Prime Minister was never spent before and perhaps will not be spent in future too. He gave a lot of money to sports and games and new stadia were built during his time. With his generosity, his interest in sports, and the encouragement he gave to sports, he created this infrastructure and we reap the fruits today.

We have to catch the children young and train them in sports while they are still at a tender age. It is not an easy task to train grown-ups. It is easier to train the young. We have, therefore, laid stress on making a beginning with school children. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi had made provision for a playground in every school, with the players' kit, and a teacher to train the children in sports. The New Education Policy has clearly laid it down that along with book learning proficiency in sports is also required. We do not have so many playgrounds yet, but it is our effort to provide such facilities in every school. The children should be tested not only for their knowledge of the text books but also for their ability in sports and the child should be assessed after taking both into account. The time for that is not yet ripe because such combined examination is not possible before the facilities for sports are created in the schools. Our effort will, however, continue. In the Eighth Plan, we are going to decide that there should be provision for the facilities indicated in the New Education Policy and we shall implement fully what Rajivji had conceived and move along the lines chalked out by him.

I had a discussion with the Chief Minister just now on several issues. This is a backward region but it would not be correct to call it backward. This is a region rich in resources although the

people here are backward and poor. This is said even about India—that this is a rich country, *ratnagarbha* or one full of jewels, but the people are poor. It is a long story why this should be so. I come from a region where regional feelings and aspirations had once become pronounced. Visiting this place, I am reminded of my own region. When there is absence of justice and atmosphere of exploitation the people become unhappy and dissatisfaction grows. It should be our effort to remove their dissatisfaction. It should be our task to make special efforts for their uplift, their progress so that they stand shoulder to shoulder with all others. This, in my view, is very essential for country which has so much variation. There is variation in development, in progress; there is variation in every field. We have to try and remove these differences in development and we are actually engaged in the task. I would like to tell you that it has always been the aim of the Central Government, but now more than ever before, to pay special attention to the problems of the backward areas and institute an arrangement whereby automatically their problems are attended to.

What is required is a system under which such problems are taken care of—not because some Chief Minister has desired that it be done, not because even the Prime Minister has deemed it necessary that it be done. The system should ensure that attention is paid to their problems. I have had occasion to meet a number of our MPs and many people have given me their representation. I would like you to know that the problems are under my consideration. We will strive to solve them as soon as possible. We will not be found wanting in this effort.

This is not the time to go into the problems of the region. I have come here today in connection with this sports event. This broad indication should be sufficient. I will come here some other time and spend more time and speak to you on the problems in some detail. These are not the problems of this region alone; there are several such regions in the country and each one has its special problems but as far as the backwardness is concerned they are all alike.

The time is now auspicious and the nation is moving forward. All over the world there is change and a transformation is taking place. Come, countrymen, let us work together and take part in this new awakening in the world, and not miss this opportunity of performing our duty and of taking advantage of the change that is taking place in the world. Let us participate in this transformation and carve out a share for ourselves. That is my prayer today.

V
Health and Social Welfare

Marching Ahead Towards Prosperity

I AM GREATLY pleased that we have gathered here for a noble task on the auspicious occasion of birthday of Indiraji. Panditji used to say that there is no need to consult an almanac for finding an auspicious day. Remember only this, the day you do a noble task, is an auspicious day. This is the sign of an auspicious day. That is why I consider that today is an auspicious day. Because for a large number of citizens of Delhi, specially those living in this part, an essential facility is going to be provided. So, it is an auspicious day.

We are constructing this hospital after the name of Baba Saheb Ambedkar. Because Baba Saheb dedicated all his life for the poor, for helpless. He completely dedicated his life for them.

When Rajivji was the Prime Minister, I was Health Minister in the Government of India. I am aware of the facts that there is shortage of the facilities. Once, on my enquiring, I was told that in All India Medical Institute, which is the biggest hospital in Delhi, 30 to 35 per cent patients are those who come from outside Delhi for treatment. It means people come there from bordering States of Delhi like Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. Similar is the condition of all other hospitals. It is not that, that the hospitals in Delhi are for Delhites only. AIIMS is a big hospital. There are many specialists and experienced doctors. Naturally, patients come to take advantage of all this. And, how can we stop them? Just because they do not belong to Delhi, we cannot ask them to go back. This is not possible. This is a mega city, Capital of the country. The facilities provided here cannot be for the residents of Delhi only. Those who come from outside are also entitled to them and hence the shortage of facilities.

Needless to say in no time Delhi's population will touch one crore. Obviously, in mega city like this, employment facilities and other activities are there and it is inevitable that people come here. And then there are embassies of many countries. In this way population will go on expanding. This cannot be prevented. All that we can do is to spread facilities as much as possible.

Speech while laying the foundation-stone of Dr. Baba Saheb Bheem Rao Ambedkar Hospital, New Delhi, 19 November 1991

As Health Minister, I had emphasised it many times. In the Health Ministry we used to discuss it everyday. I had said, "You continue to proceed with your plans, so far as big hospitals are concerned but it is not proper that people have to come here from distant places even for the treatment of minor ailments just because there are no facilities in their areas." It is improper. This adds to the burden of the major hospitals. In our surrounding areas these hospitals which can be called satellite hospitals, have a great importance. If we open a small hospital with less facilities, people will say that they are living at a distant place so a substandard hospital has been opened for them whereas for big people major hospitals have been given. This complaint is also there. That is why, I had thought, and this is the view of the Government also, that wherever these hospitals are opened, these will be major hospitals having the facility of specialists. This hospital will also have the same number of specialists as in All India Medical Institute. We will go on increasing these super facilities. Facilities will not be limited up to this level only. I have seen the design of this hospital and there is a plus point in it that it is expandable. You can expand the building and the floors. As you feel the necessity for more facilities you can also increase the size of the hospital.

Along with this, I would like to mention that you may not increase the size of such hospitals, but try to build one more instead, it will be better. Experts are of the opinion that if complete attention is to be paid, the size of a hospital should not be bigger than five hundred beds. This is the standard size of a unit. So, more such hospitals should be opened in Delhi and I think we will try to construct more hospitals during the Eighth Five Year Plan period. We will make them useful for people.

There is acute shortage of hospital services in India. There is no dearth of doctors, many are coming up. We are preparing many. But there is shortage of hospitals, shortage of facilities. Situation is even worse in rural areas. It will be our endeavour to spread amenities in rural areas, to give better facilities there. We want to undertake a large scale programme for arresting the spread of contagious diseases. Some of the diseases have come under control in our country but some others are increasing. All arrangements should be made to prevent these. This is also a part of our scheme. We can cater these services only when there is a willingness to serve among the employees of hospitals. I want that our doctors, nurses and other working in the hospitals should not take it as a job. They should treat it as an opportunity to serve others. Then the people will be immensely benefitted.

In our Indian culture, there is a saying that “doctor is divine”. We treat him equal to God, equal to ‘Hari’. The doctors should also work with the same spirit. They should not be restive over petty issues. They may have some difficulties, some demands; we will, of course, consider them. But they should not take any such step as will cause inconvenience to the people. Because when a patient goes to hospital and finds that there are no doctors, feels more aggrieved. Patients go there for relief, for treatment. And if after going to the hospital he does not get any treatment it is more painful for him. This has to be understood.

I want to make one more announcement on this auspicious occasion of birthday of Indiraji. You are aware of the formidable problems being faced by our women folk. Many types of excesses are committed against women. And you know, many times it has been discussed in the Parliament and the Government had said that there should be some remedy to it. On this auspicious occasion, I announce that our Government had decided to constitute a Commission to go into the matters pertaining to women. And this commission will submit its report after deliberation and suggest remedies to ameliorate the conditions of women. The Government will implement their report.

There is one more Commission for women but its structure is somewhat different. We are aware that many atrocities are inflicted on women. They are burnt for dowry and many other excesses are committed. When the girl child is born, efforts are made to strangulate it. It is a slur on our society. These things should be prevented. We should take stock of the situation. The Government, the society and the leaders should try to save them from such miseries. People and Parliamentarians should also work for it. There should be equitable social justice for men and women in our society. It is the need of the day. We had taken some decisions in this regard. The Honourable President had informed the Parliament that a Commission will be constituted for the rights of women and steps will be taken to safeguard their rights. So, these two Commissions are being constituted on the auspicious occasion of the birthday of our leader Smt. Indira Gandhi.

We have given a new direction to our economic policies. The policies are such as will provide more opportunities for employment and will remove the obstacles in the way of setting up new industries. There should be capital inflow from outside and absolutely no problem in investing the capital available within the country. There should be concessions and the maximum benefit of investment should go to the people. We want that the programmes for social justice should be promoted and pursued with

vigour. We also want that there should not be any reduction in the benefit of the people and what is intended to be given to them should not be eaten up by a third person. The benefit should reach the people directly and we have framed many policies to achieve this end.

In the recent elections, Indian people have given their verdict. They have put their stamp on the new policies of the Government. What more do we need? We need your support and your blessings. We have got it and we are marching ahead with a fast pace.

On this occasion, I congratulate you all on getting this hospital in your area. I hope you will co-operate with us for solving our national problems. Today the whole world is watching us to see how this country marches forward. We must make it clear to them that though our great leaders are no more amongst us, we, who remain, will never go back on promoting their programmes, on the question of welfare of the people and fulfilling the promises made by them, we will march forward with determination and readiness. This has to be conveyed to them, demonstrated to them. There are many who want to help us today, who want to invest money in India. Every other day some delegations are coming from foreign countries. They say that now they are satisfied that the country will survive. It will not be divided as they apprehended. They are returning with this hope and faith. We are fully hopeful that we will get the required external assistance. Along with this, we want to build confidence in the people of India. There are no obstacles in its way now and we will march on the road to prosperity.

Reforms for Women and Future Options

THANK YOU VERY much for calling me after a very tiresome journey. It was a distressing sight to see dozens of villages marooned, surrounded by flood-waters. When there is a natural calamity, nothing that man can do can compensate fully for the affects of the calamity.

Valedictory address at the Seminar on "Reforms for Women : Future Options", New Delhi, 21 August 1991

From that, straight to this meeting is a change. Yes, I agree. But here also, I find that there is an articulated and unarticulated distress for centuries, maybe for millennia, wherein one-half of humanity has been subordinated to the other half, the better half to the worse half, and I really do not know why this should have happened.

I would like to say that this is the eternal question, the question of why there should be so much disparity between one part of God's creation and another part, both parts being completely inter-dependent, both parts being supplementary and complementary to each other, and both parts being such that neither part can become the whole in the absence of the other. It is just one of those inexplicable atrocities that mankind has inflicted on itself over the centuries. In the old texts, it is said : *Yatra Nariyastu Pujante ramante tatra Devata*, what happened to those texts? Were the words in those texts a piece of hypocrisy to start with? Those who wrote them or conceived them, not just one *shloka* or one line but long texts, were the people who could articulate these things from the bottom of their hearts; there was no diplomacy about it; there was no *dikhawa* about it, no ostentation and no show off. They wrote what they felt. These writings pertain to an age of wonderment, an age where man just expressed himself the way he felt. There were not many *Alankara Shastras* in those days and one wonders why something coming straight from the heart of the person who is responsible to write these things or may be articulate these things, suddenly disappeared, the spirit disappeared and the letter disappeared. Maybe not so suddenly but in course of time, it disappeared and finally we come to a stage where it is said that one half of humanity is definitely inferior to the other.

To treat the other half as inferior is one thing. But to assert that it is inferior, therefore, we treat it, is something which is incorrigible. One may commit a mistake by mistake but when the mistake is asserted as the right thing to do, then it is something very hard to break and this is the stage to which the opinions about women on the part of men have come in all countries, as Najamaji just said. Why is this so and why should it be so and how long is it going to be so? These are the questions you are addressing yourself, everybody is addressing.

I have been Minister for Human Resource Development and I have actually put together the factors, all the ingredients of HRD and fashioned it as a Ministry. '*Kahin Ki eent, Kahin ka roda, bhanumati ne kunba joda*', that kind of *Kunba* I have put together, but I think there is some coherence about it by now. It has come into that *Kunba*, it is no longer a conglomeration of Secretaries who don't mix activities which do not jell. It is one activity in

which all aspects of the human being are holistically taken care of and that is what Rajivji wanted me to do. When he first told me about it, I was not clear what he meant and to say that he had a ready model before him was not true. He said, "I have a feeling that all these Ministries and Departments are going at cross-purposes sometimes and in any case are going off at a tangent and the resultant is not as it ought to be. Is it not possible for us, for anyone, to bring all these under one umbrella, into one Ministry?" Suddenly, it occurred to me that it was possible and what he was saying was correct.

When a child is sick and the teacher wants to drag him to school, the mother won't allow him. But if the teacher says, "I am education department, I don't know about the health of the child: that is the health department: so I will take him anyway", then you know what the mother will greet him with. So, health and education have to go together in respect of the child. Just one example will convince anyone: It is the mother who looks after both the health and the education of the child. The education department may not, the health department may not. So, the mother combines in herself all the departments connected with the child. In the same way, the Human Resource Development is like a mother and that is how Rajivji conceived it and we put it together. I hope it is flourishing under Arjun Singhji because that is the spirit.

Now, if you have to have a holistic approach to the problem of the child, approach it as a problem of the child and not as son or daughter. When it comes to the daughter, if you say she shall not go to school, if it comes to the son he has to go to school, then you are not holistic at all in your approach. So the New Education policy has said that to the extent of the backlog that exists in respect of education, schooling of the girl child, we will have to make it up, we will have to make some special effort until the disparity disappears and we have a uniformly equal educational opportunity given to the child. Maybe both will be only ten per cent, I don't mind, but I would not like a situation where one is 60 per cent and the other is 20 per cent. That is where the disparity comes and the society as a whole deteriorates into these two camps where one camp wants to dominate the other.

So, I have a feeling, after considering all the problems more or less the women are faced with, that if you start with equal education to the child, girl or boy, probably most of these problems could be solved. I don't say all will be solved. There may be some inherent problems, but to the extent human beings can solve the problems, these will be solved. So, we are laying special emphasis on the education of the girl child, literacy to start with, then educational

opportunities. If you take care of this, then you don't have to do lot of things which you are doing now, your organisations, your institutions, your bodies, you are looking after something which should have been looked after 35 years ago, 40 years ago. So, to that extent you are doing something of a belated exercise. If your child today doesn't suffer from discrimination in respect of sex, then your daughters-in-law tomorrow need not bother because they start with a near-equal situation. You are working on a very unequal situation. So, in the interest of the women themselves and also in the interest of the whole country and the society, I am definitely of the view that whatever the expense, whatever the trouble, whatever the persuasion needed, we will have to see that educational opportunity is equalised in the case of children, all children irrespective of sex.

So, I would like you to concentrate on this. I am not asking you to go and teach. What I am saying is since you are working in a society where all these disparities have shown in psychological terms the parent doesn't want to send his daughter to school, now because he thinks that his wife did not get any schooling, so his daughter need not get a schooling or she might think that she did not therefore her daughter need not. So, these are ingrained in the thinking of the people, in the thinking of the society and that is where you have to apply the corrective as social reformers, as persons working in the women's field.

So, we are taking up these problems. I am sure that if education is taken care of, law will be taken care of, the legal rights of women can be taken care of. In fact, they will not have to fight for their rights. Who fights for rights if rights are given? Why should we fight? I don't think women are so prone to fight all the time unless there is a reason and there is a provocation and there is a deprivation. So, if they fight, if it is good that they fight for something which they must have. But if they don't have it and still don't fight for it, that is not a good situation. And I am sure this fight will not be very long. In fact, I am not quite sure that vis-a-vis women, men are very brave. They will give in at some point, maybe sooner than later, sooner than you realise. So, please start with education. All the other things are important in themselves but so far they are important only for those who have grown as illiterate, uneducated. Those will be taken care of by all your other efforts. If you take care of education, you don't have to take care of anything else. Practically, everything will be taken care of.

We have a lot of old, ingrained faiths, let us say wrong beliefs, beliefs which do not belong to this century in any case, like Sati, and like so many other very injurious practices, uncivilized practices

in the society where the women become victims, unwilling, unwitting, unintended victims. Still the society is harsh and it is ingrained in the beliefs of the people. It is not as if all cases of Sati were forced, though many are; but it is also a fact as far as I have collected some information from the area concerned that the society itself has come to look upon this very heinous, abominable practice as something respectable. If that respectability goes, then no one will fall a prey to this. So, it is again a psychological treatment that you have to give. Suppose, something happens in a family and people say, "This woman did not commit Sati, therefore this has happened", then it is a bad practice combined with a bad superstition. This is the real problem. If there is no superstition, the bad practice will end very soon because no one wants to give one's life for nothing unless there is some compelling reason, some psychologically compelling reason. In these cases, she does not know much except to believe the superstition. Without realising what is happening, she lays down her life.

In the same way, we have the practice of child marriage. Now, 44 years after Independence, one has to admit with a sense of shame that in this country we do have what they call "cradle marriages." What barbarity is this? How can you have a cradle marriage? How can you have a marriage at the tender age of 2,3,4,5,6 and ruin the lives of thousands of such victims. We may not even know where this is happening.

Then, there is the other equally atrocious practice of Devadasis. You find a lot of literature being written, having been written, but the fact remains that it is prostitution in the name of God. Now, if God could articulate what He feels about what we have done to Him. He would be the greatest protestor today. We have done such things in the name of God, this society has exploited God to such an extent, that no other section of society has been exploited so much as God and man has been the worst exploiter of God. What are we finding in the politics of today, the year of grace, 1991, 1989-90, except the exploitation of God to the worst possible extent, in the most naked and unrepentent, unabashed manner. This is exploitation of God, nothing else. Now, when do we stop? When are we going to stop this? May be God gives us all kinds of calamities but we don't seem to learn. If someone says, "If you are good to God, don't exploit God," then everything will be all right. Suppose we say, "If you exploit God, you will have a flood" and if people start believing it, then perhaps they will not exploit God, but that is not possible. Even the superstitions today which we have developed are so injurious that they result in bad beliefs, in wrong beliefs, in injurious beliefs, disastrous beliefs and not in

good beliefs. I can understand that man requires something to believe in; belief is good, but the beliefs that we have gathered in our own minds today are the worst you can imagine. So where are we? Where is our godliness? Where is our society which is supposed to be God-fearing? Where is the society which is supposed to be 5,000 years old and based on what they call *Rita*. Is this *Rita*? This is exactly the opposite of it, abnegation of *Rita*.

So, I have to tell you and I know that I don't require to tell anything which women in this country already know. This is something which should be quite evident to you ladies, that what has happened in this country is the distortion of faith itself. I am not against faith. Man has to have faith. Much goes by faith in every society in the world. But number one, faith is not superstition. Number two, the perversion of faith that has taken place in this country—I can't speak about other countries with the same authority but since we are all in this country, we are part of this society—one can say that the perversion of faith in this country is horrendous. And something has to be done to remove this perversion. This can come with knowledge with education and with enlightenment. There can be no enlightenment without knowledge. There can be no knowledge without education. You may have education and still not have enlightenment. You may have knowledge and still not have enlightenment. You may have enlightenment and still not be useful to society. You may go to the Himalayas and leave this society. You are enlightened but what is it for. It is not useful to society. Therefore these are concentric circles. The smaller circle is contained in the bigger one and the bigger still in the bigger one but not the other way round.

So, you start with education, go to an enlightened society, the enlightened society takes care of its own problems and you will not have any of these disparities which have grown over the centuries. I am sure they have grown over the centuries. It is not the doing of one man or one day. Now, if that is the basis on which women's rights experts or exponents want to fight, that would be the wrong basis. You have to understand that this has happened over several centuries. There was a reason why we have come down to this. There was a historical reason, if you go into history you will find, it was a wrong reason I agree, but wrong reason according to us, but in the sixteenth century or seventeenth century they did not consider it a wrong reason. So, they were wrongly led to consider a wrong reason as the right reason and it went on like that. Now it is time that we reverse all these things. The basis for reversal is independence. We are free to do what we like, what we consider right, and this is the springboard of the entire action

of a society. In a free society you can make this as a starting point for whatever you want to do. If you are not free then you cannot do it. So, we have been free for 44 years, now the rest should be up to us to see what we have done, to go into details of the past only in order to gather courage, gather the enlightenment that is needed for shaping the future.

I will not go into each detail. Najmaji has already promised that you have been working in several commissions or several groups. I am sure that you will come up with recommendations that will be feasible and we can certainly make use of the law as a weapon.

In a civilised society, we don't fight with guns, we don't fight with swords—*barchchi*, *bhala*—all these are useless. We fight with law. That is the weapon. That is why legislation is extremely important. If legislation is lousy and the lawyers get a goldmine out of every fullstop and a semi colon, then you are using a weapon which is totally useless and this being the only weapon in a civilised society. If your legislation is bad, if the concept of your legislation and the implementation of your legislation are rendered inadequate and fraught with difficulties, then it means that you have lost the race even before you started running for it.

So, please tell us what you want, what you think should be done. We sit together, we will find the proper legislation for it because that is not only a tool, I call it a weapon always. I have always called legislation a weapon. Now, that weapon should be effective and it should be implementable and the rest should be supplied by social force. The social force can take several forms. It can be education. It can be public exhortation. It can be organisation of the concerned people for demanding a thing. It can also be the education of the people. In fact, it should be the education of the people before they are organised for an agitation. All these stages will have to be passed through. But education is the most important stage. We will see that whatever problems we are faced with we will try to solve them to the extent it is humanly possible through legislation, through the Governmental agencies. But I must warn you that this is only part of the story. The rest will have to come from the concerned sections of the people, namely the women themselves.

We are here absolutely ready to listen to you, to respond to the urges of the time but you must show us how and we have to respond.

Importance of Consumer Protection

I AM HAPPY to be associated with this very important body. I would have been very happy if I had had occasion to come at the end of the Conference. I have always held the view that inauguration is more a sort of ornamental thing where you call a VIP, make him inaugurate, in fact read something which someone has written, go back so that you get down to business yourself.

So, I am not satisfied with this method at all. I want to be associated in the thinking process. Since I cannot sit with you for the whole day, I would have preferred to come and attend your valedictory meeting where I could have a bird's-eye view, a wrap-up of all that you have deliberated upon and the resolutions or the recommendations or the suggestions which you have to make, I could, if possible, respond to them on the spot, but in many cases it is not possible to respond on the spot but at least I could give you some views on what you have reflected upon, deliberated upon.

I would like to follow this method. I used to follow this when I was in the Human Resource Ministry, I never went for any inauguration, I always refused inaugurations and I told them "Inauguration means you want to dispose me of in the first one hour and then deprive me of the real cream of the deliberation; I won't have it." So, I am proposing to follow the same line so that at one go I meet all of you and also I know what you have been thinking about, what you have been deliberating upon, I could sometimes tell you that you have been wasting your time, even that is possible, if I feel so because I am a very straightforward person, I don't mind calling a spade a spade which I consider a spade.

Anyhow, since I have come for the inauguration, I would like to tell you how I think important this Council is. But from what Manubhai has said, I am also disappointed. He started with disappointment and I find that I have nothing else but to echo his disappointment. A good law has been passed and it is languishing, it is not being implemented, one does not know where it is going wrong, due to whom it is going wrong. You please tell us who is

responsible. Is it the Parliament of India? I hope not. Is it the State Legislature that is responsible? I hope not. Is the Central Government responsible? If you tell us where it is responsible, I will correct it. If the State Governments are responsible we will have a Chief Ministers' meeting and tell them what the Council thinks about their functioning. I am ready for that or maybe some of you could come and talk to them. I have no problem at all. I feel that a legislation needs to be implemented; it is meant for implementation. It is not there only to adorn the Statute book. That will be a disgrace for any legislature not to get its own legislation implemented, whether it is the Government or the agency, official, non-official, demi-official, semi-official; whatever kind of agency it is, it should be our endeavour to see that the law which we pass should not become a deadletter. Afterall the law means what? It means the will of the people, the expressed will of the people in the manner in which the Constitution wants it to be expressed. If that becomes a deadletter, remains unimplemented or becomes unimplementable, then there is something wrong with whatever we have been doing.

So, please tell us where it is going wrong. If it is being politicised, as Manubhai says, let me say, we have no intention of politicising anything; we have enough politics as it is. Our plates are overfull. In the Consumer Council, I don't see any need for any politicisation. I don't see any differential rates being charged for the Congress Party and the Communist Party and the Janata Dal. If we are looted, we are all looted uniformly. Full justice is being done. Equal justice is being done to all the parties. If there are any nominations to be made, I for one stand for nominations not to be made on political basis. Let us see if something can be made on those lines. So, I am telling you plainly that this is meant for implementation and we will not tolerate any non-implementation of this law because this goes to the very root of the matter. Our entire economy rests on this. If there is no consumer movement in this country, there will be no economic management in this country. These are two sides of the same coin.

We have started with the Public Distribution System. We have been talking about the Public Distribution System for decades; not that we have not done anything. Some States have done exceedingly well, other States have done exceedingly badly. But now, we have to take up the programme on an All-India basis, on a uniform basis, so that those who are intended to be the beneficiaries of this programme do get the benefit and the benefit is not just snatched away by somebody else also. So, we are really taking it up with utmost seriousness. The Chief Ministers are coming in the next one week or so, we have given them a task;

their officers came, we have given them a task and we want the political will of all the Chief Ministers, be they of any party, to be brought to bear on this question because this means that the poorest of the poor are benefitted. If they are not benefitted, no law is worth the paper it is written on. So, we started with the Public Distribution System.

Again, we come to the consumer movement. If there is no one to tell what is adulterated, what is not adulterated, what is a good thing, what is a bad thing, no amount of officialdom is going to be able to do this. We know something about adulteration laws.

I had occasion to deal with them in the States. We could not convict a single person. Not one person could be convicted with all the laws, with all the honest officers that we had at our disposal because the court would say how do you prove that this and that have been mixed, it may have been due to some other reasons—the oil and the sediment may not be the same, the sediment may have been for some other reason. All kinds of reasons were given. There was a doubt created and the benefit of doubt was given to the accused in all cases. Our criminal law is such that the principle of giving the benefit of doubt to the accused goes to the extent of creating a doubt and giving the benefit of that doubt to the accused. Nothing has been found possible.

So, we will have to be absolutely vigilant. We will give you whatever powers that are needed to responsible citizens. As representatives of responsible citizens, we will give whatever weightage that is necessary and is possible under the circumstances according to the Constitutional provisions and according to the provisions of the law. We will try to make you effective, make the Council effective, make the Committees effective and see that when it is possible to punish people, we punish them in such a way that it becomes more or less a deterrent punishment. Even this is possible. Now, this is what the Government can do. For the rest, of course, we are all members of the society, the society at large, we are the consumers, some of us are producers also. So, it is a mixed lot that we have in this country. Therefore, everyone must be heard, everyone must have his rights vindicated, his own point of view accepted or at least heard. We are prepared to do this.

Therefore, if you are proposing another meeting—a special one-day meeting as Manubhai said, about the inflationary trends and unjust enrichment etc.—by all means have the meeting, but please come up with some suggestions that are actionable, so that action can be taken, not just debating it but some actionable programmes. You convince the Government, we are prepared to be convinced, we are prepared to take steps. This is where we

stand to-day. Within the last two or three months, this is the extent to which we could go in this new thrust towards the rural areas particularly because it is there that the action needs to be taken up and has not been taken up in the effective manner in which it is needed to be taken up.

Rajivji was the author or the originator of the consumer protection movement. He was very enthusiastic about it but like all other laws, if this has been languishing it only means that we have not had time to review it. I am told that you have had several meetings but in every meeting I think there should be a review of the manner in which the law is working. Law is a weapon in our hands. If our weapon is blunted, then you cannot do anything and that is the only weapon that we have, we don't use guns. We use law. So, therefore, the weapon that we have should be well-designed and used properly and it should be effective. Wherever it is not effective, please tell us. We will amend the Act, it is always possible to amend the Act and make it more effective.

About the functioning of these bodies, my note says that it leaves much to be desired. How it leaves much to be desired you will have to tell us and at the end of this meeting in the evening if you could come up with suggestions—of course, my colleagues will bring them to me—we will look into all those aspects and do whatever is possible. Then if there are procedural bottlenecks, those also we can look into because if a law is implemented very well in one state and it is not implemented in another State, I don't see anything inherently wrong with the law in that case. If it can be implemented at place A and cannot be implemented at place B, the wrong is somewhere at place B and not with the law. If you say that it has been uniformly failing everywhere, then I say that there is something wrong with the law. But I am told that it has been uneven, its functioning has been uneven, its implementation has been uneven, which means that the causes of unevenness would have to be removed. If they are in the law, we will have to remove them, if they are in the actual functioning, in the persons, in the committees, in the bodies, in the agencies, then we will remove them wherever they exist. So, let us really take stock of the situation. If you had eight meetings without any result, then let this not be the ninth meeting without any result. I want some result there in this meeting.

Then, in the decision on Public Distribution System, we have started with the most backward areas. We have started with the hilly areas, with the tribal areas where nobody goes, no officer goes, not even the political leader goes except at the time of elections. So, these are the areas which are totally isolated from

the outside world and there we don't know whether people really get anything to eat. I know of areas which were in my old constituency twenty years ago; it was impossible to reach some places. Now it is much better but even then we are not quite sure that all the commodities that are needed to lead an average life of an individual are reaching there in time. They may be reaching late, they may not be reaching at all, they may not be reaching in the quantities that are needed and hence, the Public Distribution System. It is that system alone that can correct all these distortions and deficiencies and therefore, we are concentrating on that and concentrating on the areas where that system alone can deliver the goods. There is nothing parallel to that functioning at the moment.

So, I would like you to tell me where the consumer movement needs to be given a shot in the arm, where the functioning has to be improved, where the law needs to be improved. So, it is a blank cheque like thing that I am giving you. If there is anything that I have to do, please rest assured that we will take very seriously all the suggestions given by you and we will go into each one of them and implement them to your satisfaction or to the satisfaction of the people, as the case may be. Please go ahead with your deliberations and let us not spend too much time on the inauguration.

Accelerating Socio-Economic Rural Development

I AM SORRY I was absent for some time after the lunch perhaps. Of course, the loss is entirely mine. As Minister in charge of Rural Development it is only natural that I should be present here to absorb the wisdom available in all parts of the country which I myself could not have collected by my effort. So, I express my gratitude to Viren bhai (Shri Viren Shah) who came and told me that this is what he wants to do. I was so impressed by the very idea of a meeting like this that I immediately agreed on one

Speech at the Conference on "Accelerating Socio-Economic Rural Development",
New Delhi, 7 December 1991

condition that I don't come to inaugurate; number two, that I will sit as long as I want or can; and if I have anything to say at the end—'if'—I will say it in the fewest possible words and if I don't have to say anything then I won't. Now, these were rather difficult conditions for anyone to agree; then he could have said, "Then why do we want the Prime Minister at all, if he is not going to inaugurate, if he is not going to speak". So, I said, "Yes, I come there as one of you because I have been doing it all my life." Prime Ministership is something which is very recent. But if I have been doing anything at all and I don't want to be devoid of the satisfaction that I have done something after 55 years of public life and when I look back I think I have been doing only this, rural development, starting from the time when I was a member of a nominated district board in the old days. I have been doing this. So, we have a long experience both of success and failure, both of frustration and elation. So, I think it is my right and duty to be here and I don't need any gratitude from any quarter for what I am doing.

One thing which I have learnt and which I got corroborated from what Nanaji (Shri Nanaji Deshmukh) has said, just now is that there are a vast number of problems in this country which cannot be pigeonholed into politics. I have yet to see a Congress road or a Communist well. They are all meant for the people and, therefore, to politicise development is the worst folly I could think of but I know for a fact that development is being politicised not only here but all over the world. The politics of development is something which many people understand in many countries. If you have to break it, perhaps you could break it in a decentralised way in India and show the way to others. If we don't, then politicisation which has already taken place will become worse and you will find that the disparities among countries, disparities between country and country, will go on increasing to such an extent that probably the world will not be able to sustain it. So, it is not only a pointer within the country, it is an equally valid pointer for the whole world. That is what the North-South problem is about, but I will not go into that.

Nanaji said he has left the party. I say I will not leave the party but I will do what he is doing and I will encourage anything done by anyone—politician, non-politician who does what Nanaji is doing there. So, I want a Nanaji, I want Annasaheb Hazare, no matter whether he is a politician or a non-politician, no matter whether he is a businessman or a labourer, but I want the person and that is what he was talking about when he said about the human element.

What we need is very simple to me. The problem in this country is one of magnitude. The problem is not one of complexity. If we want one village to progress, we want five lakh fifty thousand villages to progress. So, one village progressing makes no impact and, therefore, it is the magnitude that has to be looked into. If every teacher is given Rs. 10 extra as salary, you have to give about fifty lakh teachers ten rupees each and you cannot give it to one and deny it to other. So, it is the magnitude, the bigness of the problem that is baffling.

Now, I have been hearing about pilot projects right from 1950. For forty one years I have heard about pilot projects but I have not seen any pilot project proving or disproving anything. Some claim that it has proved something but it does not prove it in the next State, in the next district or the next block. So, what does it prove, what does it disprove? Now, the problem after 41 years is that the whole country has to be a pilot project. If you don't lift the whole country, you will never be able to make any impact. Therefore, it is one of replication, it is one of extension, it is one of making the whole country do what is needed. How it is done from area to area, village to village, district to district, is a different matter. But what we need is to meet the basic needs everywhere. I cannot ask one block to wait until I am able to give drinking water to another block. This is not possible. So, it has to be whole country at a time and no pilot project business. If it becomes necessary, something very very new which has never been experimented, never been thought of and you think it is too risky to take it up all over the country, I can understand here and there some pilot project. But now let us not go too much with these projects—on matters which are known, on problems which are known, on solutions which are known or at least a range of solutions which are known. Let us start with the whole country as the unit and there is nothing more to be said about piloting hereafter.

And what does it mean? It means manpower. It means that people should be ready to do this work. Government—good, bad, indifferent—over the years has thought it fit that it must have representation in every village, some kind of representation, a village level worker, or whatever. Before the community development came, there was no one in the village except the Patwari or the Patel or somebody. They were not really government servants that way. They were doing something on commission basis and so on. They came from the village and you could not really have pigeonholed them in the civil service. Now, for the first time this bureaucracy, properly so called, was set up right down to the village level after we became independent after we thought that it is necessary to look into the problems of the people at the grass

root level. So, we have the government Panchayati Raj. You have on the one side the peoples' Panchayati Raj and on the other hand the Government Panchayati Raj, both coexisting today. We ask them to work together but we don't know, we are not sure, that they are working together everywhere and where they are working together we do not know for what purposes they are working. Sometimes it is the perfect co-ordination between the engineer and the contractor; even that is possible. We have gone through these things. We have seen these things. There is really nothing that I am saying which is new.

It is amazing how in the first ten years all the problems which you have been talking about today were already seen. They came to the surface, they were noticed, they were commented upon. I have heard nothing new today which I have not heard before 1960. Panditji himself said, "Yes devolution of power is needed, but it has to be decentralised." In 1957 he inaugurated the first Panchayati Samiti in Shadnagar near Hyderabad. I was present there. Then immediately after a year or so, he said it is not sufficient, it is not enough; if you decentralise you also have to debureaucratise. So, devolution, decentralisation, debureaucratisation, all the three methods, all the three slogans were raised by no less a person than Panditji himself within the first ten years. Now, we are still grappling with the same problems and the incongruities between those problems. So, the time has come when we have to work together. They have been asked to work together. They have and they haven't. It is a mixed picture.

Panchayati Raj has come. How many committees have gone into it, one after another, after another! Ultimately what did the committees do? They only meddled with or played with the outward structure of Panchayati Raj. Somebody said it has to be a three-tier, somebody said it has to be a two-tier. Only the structural aspects were gone into as if you made three instead of two all the problems would be solved. The fact remains that the problems have nothing to do with your structure. They are largely different. They come from human motivation and the main thing was how you motivate the people to help themselves.

Brilliant idea struck everyone in the fifties and they said that there must be some contribution from the people and that too *Shramdaan*. We thought everything was solved. Within two or three years, the idea of *Shramdaan* deteriorated into paying money for wages. If I am supposed to go and work in the field today, and I don't want to go, I will send one wage earner instead and say he represents me at the *Shramdaan*. Now, *Shramdaan* was not conceived that way either by Vinobaji or Gandhiji. No one

substitutes in *Shramdaan*. Once the substitution started, the deterioration started because the spirit had gone. The most ingenious way was that the engineer worked out for us. The estimate would include *Shramdaan*, so there was no *Shram*, no *daan*. This is the kind of thing that has happened, this deterioration in the system itself. There was nothing wrong in the system but the deterioration was because of human element, because somehow we missed the real point, we missed the spirit of the whole programme.

Now, Government is an entity. Today I told you that I am prepared to withdraw the bureaucracy. Why did I say so? I am not really against bureaucracy. I had worked with bureaucracy all my life. I have been in Government, out of Government, I have not come across one single case where I was dissatisfied with any bureaucrat and vice versa because we know our limitations and we know our jobs. If I know my job well, I don't have to blame the other fellow. If he knows his job well, he does not have to blame me. So, it is a question of understanding one's own job and understanding the umbilical cord that joins the one with the other. If this is properly understood and implemented there should be no need for any clash between the bureaucrat and the people's representative. But they don't understand. I have seen Collectors going round collecting garlands at public meetings and telling "*Arey uskey pass kyon jatey ho, mere pass aao, main sub karke deekhaoonga.*" I mean he is talking against the Member of Parliament, he is talking about the MLAs, he is talking against the Zila Parishad Chairman and the Zila Parishad Chairman says "*main to iska tabadala karake rahunga*". So, that is the kind of co-operation you have today in some places. So, the thing has deteriorated. The work has deteriorated.

Now, we are thinking of Panchayati Raj taking over programmes of development. Now, there is a real question mark here. A Panchayat after all is said and done is a political body. There are elections, there are parties, even if there are no parties there are groups and it is the outcome of a political process. Let us face it. You are asking the outcome of a political process to be in charge of a programme which should have nothing to do with politics. Is it possible? Is this *Kayakalpa* possible? Is this change of role possible? It should be possible but is it being made possible? Generally it is not found possible and, therefore, this politicisation starts.

So, we have to think in terms of creating the atmosphere where at a particular level politics is forgotten and only development is attended to. It is like two lawyers going and arguing their case

very forcefully before the court but when they come into the bar room they forget everything and they are very good friends. Now it is just like that. You have an election. After the election, after the people give their verdict, you are best friends because you have to serve the people together. Now, we can set that example at the top, it will seep down to the bottom. I have no doubt about it.

In my own small way I am trying that, with some success so far and I am glad about it. I do not find any problem which really pertains to a party. I find the problems of the country, even big problems of the country, cutting across parties. And when you have something on the table it is very difficult for any party to say that I do not agree with this. They may try to give another angle to it, yes agreed, but then finally the solutions seem to become so obvious and the problem is also so clear or so transparent that in very few cases it is possible to differ.

Now, that is even happening in the economic field now. If I can prove that, even in the economic reforms we don't have a party predilection, we need not have a party predilection, then perhaps the last nail will be driven. We need a few more days. We need some more effort. I am not quite sure that we will do it. But I think we will do it to some extent, maybe to a large extent. So, there is a new culture coming in this country, a culture where politics and development with all their interconnection are kept apart at the operational level. At the ideological level if there is anything I have no objection on that. If someone says that my party stands for only small irrigation tanks, don't go in for big projects like Bhakhra, I say yes you have a right to say that but I also have a right to say that Bhakhra is necessary. Let people decide, let people understand. But they don't do it, we only go by individuals and that is where it is not politics but wrong politics that is plaguing us, plaguing this country.

We have a new experiment now on our hands. Everyone is welcome. It is not difficult to debureaucratise a particular area of a particular machinery. It is not difficult to hand it over to any agency which wants to do it and show the results. This is what we are trying to do. We want to do it and I tell you in all sincerity I would like to see that it is done, it is taken up at the Planning Commission level and becomes an integral part of the next Plan which we are now preparing. I think I consider myself fortunate that I have become Prime Minister at a time when the Eighth Plan is on the anvil. If it had been one year later everybody would have said there is no Plan provision for this and to create a plan provision in a plan which is already signed, sealed and delivered is next to impossible. This is the time and that is why for the last six or

seven days I have been exposed to so many angles, so many ideas on rural development and I am trying to absorb all this greedily, with all the greed at my command. With all the capacity of absorption at my command I am absorbing it. Something will come out. I have no doubt about that.

What is the unit of development? A block, a mandal, a village, a district? Evidently for different purposes you have to have different units. If you want the unit for secondary education it cannot be a block or a village because there will hardly be even one school. You must have about 200, 300 schools to administer to make it a unit and that means a district. If it is only primary schools, you can't have a district, then you will have 1,000 primary schools, you won't be able to know what is happening, so it has to be a block. Now, if it has to be something smaller, then it has to be the village. So the units also change according to the programme which was the structure under Panchayati Raj, which continues to be the structure under Panchayati Raj. So, you have a structure there. Where you want to supplant it, where you want to supplement it. I entirely agree with Nanaji that supplementation should be the spirit but sometimes if it is supplanting that is needed we are prepared to do that. We have no problem about that at all. All this flexibility will be built into rural development.

But there are large chunks of the programme which have not been addressed at all. Nobody knows what is happening to education except bringing all the chairs and tables whenever a leader comes to a village. We don't seem to even look at the village school. This has been my experience. Whenever I went to a village, I saw a lot of benches and chairs coming, I used to ask them "*Yeh kahan se aaye hain?*" "*Hum to school say lekar aaye hain*" was the reply. So, that day the school has a holiday. I go to a village, I find the entire school children waving flags at me. I feel infuriated, I tell you, when the children are brought out to show flags. Is this their job? Should they not be learning? Should they not be at school? Why should they be dragged out? We have to see that these things are done away with. When so many agencies are available, now it is only a question of putting an agency in charge of a work. It is a question of marriage—marrying an agency with a task. We can do that. If we all take it up, the agencies that are available take it up, we can do it.

But I want to ask you again. Virenbbhai should tell me after looking into the statistics, what is the total coverage of all the agencies in this country apart from the Government. The total coverage of non-governmental agencies in this country must be not very much, not very much. In any case it is not as much as is

justified by the speeches that we hear at conferences. The same people come, the same speeches are made. But the point is that the coverage does not increase. So, I have to do something in the area which is uncovered. You give me the choice of a block or the choice of a village and I will show you the results. But I don't have the choice. You don't have the choice. In this country there are villages which are so backward that even to reach that village you will have to travel two days and may be on foot. If you choose that well and good. Or choose a village which is just by the roadside; yes, everything can be done. And, I will tell you what happens where everything is done free. I have done everything free for my village and today it is the biggest Nexalite centre in the area. I don't mind it. But I am just telling you as one of the facts of life you have to face. Because once you raise the urges of the people, once the education of the people takes a particular direction you don't know how to canalise it thereafter. It is not in your hands and it should not be in your hands. If the people want to do something by their own free will you have no right to stop it; you only have to give whatever is necessary by way of development there. Therefore, let us give this new turn, new inspiration to the programmes of development. I have said many times that if I want to be remembered in this country I want to be remembered as the development Prime Minister of India, not as anything else. If I could turn the attention of the people from all these non-issues which are plaguing us today towards development I would have done my duty, more than done my duty and I would think that something has been done for the country.

Therefore, in the plan whatever you suggest we would like to draw the right conclusions and break it up into actionable parcels. This is what we have to do. Just ideas will not be enough. Those ideas should amount to actionable parcels—maybe small, maybe big, maybe medium; it doesn't matter. The size can take care of itself.

So, what I would suggest to Virenbhai is what all has been said today, put all the ideas one after the other, sift them, analyse them; put some people on the job. The concrete suggestions that come out,—10, 15, 20, 30, 50, whatever their number, we will parcel them out as relevant to each other. If 10 of them are relevant to one area of activity we will put them apart. We will ask the Planning Commission to go into it and see if this can be done and I don't see why it should not be done because I want that there should be nothing foisted from above. We don't have to say that this is the method of doing it. But there are certain basic things which no one can wish away. It is the accountability. Who holds himself or

herself accountable for the results and for the funds? I am afraid, no Prime Minister of India can say there is no need for any accountability nor is it possible for any of you to say. So, there are certain musts. Keeping these musts in view, let us have as much variety as possible. Maybe after five years, it would be possible for us to marry these again once more and evolve something which cuts across politics, and also gives you an exponential progress in this country, not just linear because that will not do. The problems are increasing so fast that any linear progress will not do. It has to be exponential, it has to be by leap-frogs and only then you will be able to deal with these problems successfully.

The most important thing is motivation. How do you bring in motivation? I am prepared to cut down to the bone all the rules, all the regulations, provided accountability is not affected adversely. Wherever you tell me that there is a rule which can be cut without detriment to accountability, you take it that it will be cut. I am prepared to do that because sometimes even unjustifiably rules are blamed. If you analyse the rule, you will perhaps come to the conclusion that without the rule, accountability will not be ensured. You don't think through it before criticising. Please think through and come. Let us all do that. It is not as if you have to come to me. I am prepared to sit with you, the Planning Commission is prepared to sit with you. These are man-made rules, you can change them, you can scrap them, you can substitute them with better rules but don't ask me to carry on the development of the country or the administration of the country without any rule. That is just not possible as we all can understand. Therefore, whatever man can do, whatever the human agency, whatever the Governmental agency can do, please rest assured that it will be done. There is no *paththar ki lakeer* here. We have changed it several times. In the administration lots of reforms have come. Whether the reformed structure is better than the old one or not, is a question for anyone to decide. But the point is that we have been reforming. I don't know how many times we have amended our Constitution? I think it is the seventy-second Amendment that is coming now. People say that we have been great amenders, champion amenders. I don't think any Constitution in the world has been amended so often.

So, it is not as if we did not want change. We are really running, running for change. We are smarting for change. In fact, we have been too impatient with whatever we have. It is good. For a new nation it is good. Instead of being lethargic, just resting on its oars, it must always ask for change. Let us change. But everytime let us see that the change is for the better and satisfy ourselves that the change has been for the better.

So, this is all I wanted to say. You can continue the debate because if I have to leave and I have to leave now, I have the Chinese Prime Minister's visit on my hands, maybe I will be able to talk to him on this subject. I remember, on the occasion of our then Prime Minister's visit to China, on one of the dinners the sole subject which we discussed across the table between the delegations was agriculture. We found that in many respects we are a shade better, in some respects they are better. Now, this is the kind of thing we have to develop between countries also. Instead of talking of only one subject, we will have to talk of many subjects where these great countries can co-operate with one another for the good of mankind. So, the whole atmosphere is changing. In the whole world, it is changing. What I want is that we should not be lagging behind. We have to change with the times, with the world, with all the other countries which have been able to see the writing on the wall.

Need for Effective Public Distribution System

I AM VERY happy to be present here today. It is the New Year Day and I got an opportunity to give you my best wishes on this auspicious occasion. Again I am also getting an opportunity to inaugurate an auspicious programme. This opportunity was given to me by Sri Shekhawatji. He invited me very affectionately. I am grateful to him. As he said, I have seen a lot in my life. I have faced many misfortunes. I had good experiences and also bad experiences. So I know somewhat about the problems in the villages and what different types of problems are there in each State. Here there is the problem of drought. I have just been told that if there is a four or five year old child, he might not have seen rains at all and all of a sudden when he sees the rains, he is taken aback not comprehending what is happening.

Now I may tell you about another area. In the coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh, lands are so fertile that they yield crop of gold. When the paddy crop and the jowar crop are almost ready, and the

harvesting is to take place in another two or four days, all of a sudden, there is thunderstorm, there is cyclone, there is so much of rainfall that entire crop is ruined. There is water everywhere. The entire crop comes under water and it remains there for 10 to 12 days. It subsides or gets drained so the entire crop is ruined. So here is one type of calamity and there another type of calamity.

Those of us who come from villages face many types of calamities. So we leave everything to God. The villagers are very theistic. So much labour on sowing, so much on pruning and when the farmer expects the reward very shortly, there is slip between the cup and the lip, somebody snatches away the cup from the lip. Sometimes it is because of nature and we say that it is the wish of God. When after so much of toil and labour, one does not receive the reward, then we think that nature is angry because we might have committed sins, or we search some other excuse. The farmers, the villagers, have great faith in God. This is a very good thing but we must make our efforts.

There is a *shloka* in Sanskrit which says that six parts of effort should be made by man and one should be left to God. So you are fighting on two fronts. I salute this area, I salute this land of brave people. And I want to tell you that I am one of you. You have one type of experience. I have another type. But calamity is calamity. It is the duty, the sacred duty of your representatives, of your elected Government to help those who are in distress. There cannot be two opinions.

A public distribution system has been working in the country. It has some shortcomings, some lacunae. I have been told foodgrains were supplied, but they did not reach the shop. There are many people with long hands who misappropriate the supplies.

It is true that the supplies were not received in the village. It is also true that the supplies were received in the cities. But there was some pilferage of commodities while transporting. Such complaints were received very often. What is the reason? The reason is that the system we formulate is not implemented honestly and sincerely. On the one hand the government spends a lot of money and on the other the benefits do not reach the needy. We realised this when we took over at the Centre four or five months ago. We decided that the system should be set right and it should be started in such areas where the poorest and most backward people live; so we selected desert and hilly areas and other backward areas. So we identified very carefully, in consultation with State Governments, some 1700 blocks and today at this very moment this programme is being launched in 1700 blocks. I got the

opportunity to launch the programme here. I consider myself lucky for that.

Just now Shekhawatji said that he wants me to make a tour of this area. I will come here positively when I have time. I shall come to your village to meet you personally. But it is not necessary to go from village to village to see it for myself. I can visualise what the problem is. I came from a village where there is drought sometimes and floods some other time. So I am victim of both types of calamities. We have here Mirdhaji, Shekhawatji and other experienced friends. We have to sit together, from the Centre as well as from the States, to prepare a programme to face these situations. Even if we prepare a programme in Delhi, it is to be implemented by the State Government apparatus. It is a joint effort. I have been saying it even earlier that Central and State Governments are not different entities, these are not enemies of each other, opponents of each other. We have to work together to help the people so that benefits could reach them. The money with the Central Government is yours, the money with the State Government also belongs to you. We have got a Constitution which tells that money from certain sources go to Centre and money from certain sources go to States; but the entire money comes from you. We do not contribute any money ourselves—of course some money comes from foreign sources but all belongs to the people only and we have to work to provide benefits to the people.

There are many problems which cannot be solved by old methods. In the reserve forests of foothills and in the deserts, there are many small villages with only ten, fifteen or fifty houses. But even there we have to provide them with drinking water and a school. We cannot say that they are very few in number so no need to provide water. A well is needed in a village irrespective of the population.

But science has now made great progress and maximum energy is available to you in Rajasthan—this energy is from Sun God—the solar energy. So you are very lucky. If our scientists could do that, if we could mould our technology to generate electricity from the sun, then you will be able to run your machines, your pumps and all other things from that energy. Then you will get power before others get it. So this is a great challenge for science. We have to face this challenge. We have to meet this challenge and we want to do it.

I have received your demands and I find them reasonable. It is my duty to consider these. Ours is a poor country, all are not prosperous here and all cannot be prosperous. But it is our foremost duty to meet the minimum needs of the people. We shall make all

efforts and continue to make all efforts in this direction. This is what I want to tell you.

I have a request to you all—to our sisters and brothers in the villages. We have formed committees in each village to check whether the commodities are being received through the Public Distribution System at the shops in the villages. You have to check and ensure that the commodities are received and properly distributed, properly sold. Only you can do the job. None else can. I would especially request my sisters that they should take over this job. If this system runs smoothly for one or two years, then it will automatically run smoothly and there will be no trouble, perhaps no dishonesty would creep into it. But during the first year you will have to look into their working very carefully and very minutely. I solicit your co-operation in the smooth running of this system. Since this system is for you, for your advantage, you have to devote full attention to this programme and extend your full co-operation.

Social Justice Ought to be Promoted

I PROFOUNDLY THANK you for responding to our invitation to participate in this Conference.

The issue for consideration by this Conference is of vital importance and is rather urgent in view of the hearing of the matter in the Supreme Court.

My Government is keen to ensure that the benefit of reservation in the services under the Government of India to be provided in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution goes first to the poorer sections amongst the Socially and Educationally Backward Classes. It is in view of this concern that within the first 100 days of assuming office, after consulting the political parties at the Centre, we amended the earlier Government orders regarding reservation in jobs for the SEBCs so as to provide that the poorer sections from the SEBCs shall be given preference in jobs against

the reserved quota and only if sufficient number of candidates from the poorer sections of SEBCs are not available, the benefit will go to the other members within the SEBCs.

In recognition of the fact that the other economically backward sections who are not covered by existing schemes of reservation because of their condition of economic deprivation are seriously handicapped in competing for jobs on equal terms with the economically advanced sections, we also provided additional reservation for the Economically Backward Sections (EBSs) not covered by any of the existing schemes of reservation.

It is our avowed belief that social justice ought to be promoted in an atmosphere of social harmony and peace.

We have decided that the economic criteria for identifying poorer sections among SEBCs and other Economically Backward Sections should be laid down by the Government after evolving a broad national consensus on this issue so that the well intended policy of providing reservation in Central Services for SEBCs and EBSs does not give rise to any ill-feeling in the various sections of society and thereby hamstring us in our endeavour towards providing a fair share in the governance of the country to the backward classes whose representation in the services has thus far been minimal.

The central theme for consideration before this Conference is to discuss and evolve an economic criteria which should determine the eligibility for reservation in civil posts and services under the Government of India to be filled through direct recruitment of poorer sections of the SEBCs and other Economically Backward Sections of the people not covered by any existing schemes of reservation. The economic criteria needs to be determined with utmost caution and care taking into account all relevant factors.

As I have already told you, there is an urgency to decide about the economic criteria. The reservation policy, as announced through an O.M. of 25 September 1991, is subjudice before a 9-Member Constitution Bench of the Honourable Supreme Court and the hearing before the court is at an advanced stage. One of the issues to be adjudicated upon by the Supreme Court relates to the application of the economic criteria to the reservation policy for the SEBCs and EBSs. Therefore, the court had been seeking the decision of the Government in respect of economic criteria. We, on our part, communicated to the Honourable Court that we intended to determine economic criteria after evolving, if possible, a national consensus and it is with this end in view that this conference has been convened.

It is in the above context, that I had written letters on 29 October 1991 and 24 December 1991 to all the Chief Ministers impressing upon them to favour us with their considered views in regard to the elements which should be included in the economic criteria including their experiences, if any, in their State. I believe, some reminders were also sent by my colleague, Shri Sitaram Kesri.

I appreciate that the issues are complex and ticklish and that is why, it was not possible for you to respond to my letters with the speed and urgency that I had tried to convey through my letters. However, by now, most of the States except a few have communicated their views which have been incorporated in the Background Paper already with you. You would observe the uniformity and divergence of opinion as received from various State Governments. During discussions today, we will have to make an attempt to understand each other's point of view and make a very sincere and serious effort to evolve a broad national consensus on the issue in question.

Several approaches are possible for identifying poorer sections among the Socially and Economically Backward Classes and the Economically Backward Sections.

It is, however, essential that the elements of the economic criteria should be determined in such a manner that the most deserving sections of the SEBCs and EBSs are not left out and at the same time it does not leave the doors too open to enable affluent sections of the target groups to corner the jobs.

Indeed no single solution can satisfy all the people. Any set of criteria that may be adopted may leave some dissatisfied and there may still be some grey areas.

Notwithstanding all these problems, the Conference is expected to come up with a set of criteria which by and large meet the objective of focussing on the most deserving sections among the SEBCs and EBSs and also at the same time contain safeguards which should minimise the probabilities of misutilisation without making the procedure too cumbersome.

Friends, as you are aware, my Government has embarked on a programme of economic reform of unprecedented dimension. In our zest for economic reform and liberalisation, however, we have not been oblivious of the needs of the under-privileged sections of our society. Reservation of jobs under the Government by itself cannot be a panacea for the economic malaise of the down-trodden classes because the number of jobs under the Government is very limited. However, this would ensure a share for them in the governance and administration of the country.

I need hardly mention that our society is in a ferment today as, among other things, we are in the throes of a major sociological change.

With these words, I inaugurate the Conference and look forward to a meaningful and purposive discussion towards evolving a consensus on the determination of the elements of economic criteria.

VI

International Affairs

India and Germany to Work for Just World Order

I AM GRATEFUL to your Excellency for the warmth of your welcome and for the goodwill you have always shown India. I come here as an admirer and friend of the German people.

Speaking for all my countrymen, I congratulate you on the historic unification of the two Germanies which has removed the division of Europe. We know you are still in the early stages of the complex process of regenerating your country and people. We applaud you for the courage and confidence with which you are meeting this formidable challenge. We admire your deep sense of commitment to a common future and a shared destiny for the people of this great country.

We, too, Mr. Chancellor, are embarked on a daunting journey of transforming India into a modern prosperous and front-ranking nation in the world. Our journey also demands faith and commitment. India has come through an agony of spirit and a crisis such as it has seldom faced since Independence. The poignancy of the loss of Rajiv Gandhi, who was your guest three years ago, will always remain with our people, and with me personally. Yet, the spirit of calm and fortitude has once again seen India through.

India has, of course, serious problems to contend with. Our economy was badly affected by the Gulf crisis and its aftermath. The slow down in world trade had its own impact. We came up against a sharp balance of payments crisis just when political conditions forced an election to Parliament midway through its term. Inheriting this crisis, my Government has set about initiating a comprehensive and integrated programme of economic reforms. We have dismantled the regime of controls and licensing. We want to make Indian industry more competitive and efficient. We are determined to integrate India into the mainstream of world economy.

The Federal Republic of Germany has been a partner in India's development since the early fifties. The Rourkela Steel Plant and the Indian Institute of Technology in Madras, stand as impressive symbols of the German Government's commitment to India's future. A number of key projects in the engineering, chemical and energy

sectors have been set up with German assistance. You are our largest trade partner in Europe and a major source of investment and technology. Today, Mr. Chancellor, when India is embarked on a historic endeavour for economic renewal and revitalization, we know we can count upon German understanding and support. I believe there is a strong mutual interest in enabling India to make a success of its bold and sweeping reforms. There is a potential for an enduring and mutually rewarding partnership that has barely been explored.

We also look to Germany as a friend in the vast and vigorous world of the European Community. Project 1992 is near at hand and we welcome this challenge and opportunity for Indian enterprise.

I cannot, Mr. Chancellor, but recall how, nearly forty years ago, India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, in one of his letters to the Chief Ministers of Indian States, remarked:

“The Germans undoubtedly want a United Germany. A time may come when the rival contestants for the body and soul of Germany might be increasingly ignored by the Germans themselves who are, in the final analysis, Germans, caring for their own country.”

What Germany has done is representative of the new trends in Europe which we watch with interest. Historical processes have suddenly been accelerated. The post-war situation that had looked settled has been challenged. Whether it is to be modified by consensus among nations—of which the unification of Germany is a shining example—or by force, or by the will of a few, is a question of crucial significance for the world.

Consensus, conciliation and concord are the determinants of India's foreign policy. It is difficult to speak of a “foreign” policy to nations whose language, whose history, whose culture is as much our own as ours is theirs. That is the paradox we find in South Asia. My Government will not be found wanting in initiating, and responding to, political indications of trust and goodwill that unite the countries in our region at the people's level.

We favour universalism through the United Nations. We stand for strengthening and democratising of this body, so that it becomes more capable of dealing with the new global agenda. We must device specific initiatives in this regard, as the organisation approaches its fiftieth anniversary.

Excellency, I have benefitted greatly from our talks today. I am deeply satisfied by the renewal of Indo-German friendship to which you have personally contributed a great deal. We were moved by the gesture of President Weizsacker's State visit to India earlier

this year, as a mark of solidarity with India. I hope that my visit, though brief, will lead to a significant expansion in the scope of your bilateral co-operation and promote greater mutual understanding. The Festival of India which we will jointly inaugurate tomorrow, is a fitting celebration of the tradition as well as the promise of Indo-German friendship.

Excellency, three years ago, while welcoming Rajiv Gandhi, you had spoken with foresight of a new involvement in international politics. You had observed at that juncture, and I quote, "The vision shared by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru of a just world order free of conflict and of a world no longer divided into power blocs is needed now than ever before." Mr. Chancellor, the end of the Cold War and of the confrontation between opposing military alliances, is a matter of deep satisfaction to India, this is a spectacular first step. However, the just world order free of conflict that you spoke of is still to be achieved. India and Germany are joined in the pursuit of that ideal.

Issues before Southern Africa

I EXTEND TO you a very warm welcome to India. As an erstwhile participant in your distinguished Committee, I am particularly happy to meet you and feel gratified that the sixth meeting of your, rather our Committee is taking place in New Delhi.

My mind today, inevitably, goes to Rajiv Gandhi. The dynamism he brought to bear on this issue is vivid in our memory. Many of you would be personally familiar with his contribution at Nassau and Vancouver. He took his commitment to its logical end. One outcome towards which he made a special effort was the setting up of this Committee to further the objectives of the Okanagan statement.

Much has happened since the Committee was constituted at Vancouver. Namibia has regained its independence. Nelson Mandela is free. Political dialogue on South Africa's future has commenced. In recent months, the acceptance of the concept of the multi-party conference and the repeal of laws which formed the legislative

cornerstone of apartheid, in particular the Population Registration Act, the Group Areas Act and changes in the draconian Internal Security Act, have given a sense of hope. The statutory pillars of the apartheid system are beginning to crumble.

Your Committee would no doubt assess the cumulative impact of these changes. It must also be recognised that much still remains to be done. Many political prisoners still continue to languish in South African jails. The return of all exiles to their homeland is still to be achieved. There are still significant differences among the parties concerned over the character of the new Constitution and the means to implement it. We are gravely concerned at continuing violence within South Africa. These developments clearly indicate that there is no room for sitting back. I am sure our colleagues from the frontline States will offer important insights in this regard.

The committee's objectives are clear. It is to work towards the elimination of apartheid and the dawn of a new era of complete racial and social equality and democratic freedom based on universal suffrage in a unitary South Africa. The road will be difficult and would need perseverance. It is time to focus not only on the dismantling of apartheid but also the emergence of new systems and institutions that would effectively replace it. In this effort we must also count upon the people of South Africa themselves, even if we are denied their participation at first hand right now. In the next two days, you, distinguished Foreign Ministers will deliberate on these and related matters. The Harare Summit will act on your recommendations.

The renowned Italian landscape artist, Joseph Bottoro, was famed for a painting of a scene by the Cape of Good Hope where the summer grass was speckled by the wings of birds at rest, while a lion lazed languidly nearby. "The lion has become a birdwatcher", he titled his work. So let it be with South Africa. Let symbols of fear unleash the gentleness which, as humans, they must possess. Let those who have terrified savour the stillness and beauty of a world at peace, which they can help shape. Let the oppressed find victory with, and not merely from, the oppressor.

To that South Africa, may your deliberations help steer our way. I wish you all success in your deliberations. I welcome you once again to New Delhi and I hope that your deliberations after so many meetings, so many years of effort, continuous effort will bear fruit.

Our Foreign Policy

I AM GRATEFUL to the honourable Members who have made such a meaningful contribution to the debate. I also feel a little disappointed that this year the Demands of the Ministry of External Affairs could not come before the House as they have always been coming year after year and I think this should be the last year in which such a thing has happened. From next year, we should see to it that the Ministry of External Affairs, India's Foreign Policy, is brought into focus as it has always been brought. Of course, it is nobody's fault. We are not on the point of fault-finding at the moment. But, I agree that we should restore it back to the position of importance it always had.

We are really discussing something which has baffled the whole world. The changes in the world during the last few years and probably during the last few months, have been so quick, so difficult to explain in terms of times, in terms of motivation, in terms of immediate or remote cause. So, there is an element of bafflement, an element of the unknown, unforeseen, unanticipated in all these events. And therefore, when you are in the midst of such quick baffling changes, what you see in front of you is a new set of uncertainties. We do not know how this has happened and we do not know equally what is going to happen next. At best we can only make an assessment of the situation and on the basis of that assessment, we could perhaps in a vague manner, in a general way, determine the policy of our Government or determine about the policies of other Governments, other powers in the world. So, the interaction also becomes full of uncertainties and therefore, today when we talk of foreign policy, when we talk of the international situation, no one can say for sure that what he is saying is bound to happen and what someone else is saying will never happen. So, this is the kind of new uncertainty in which we find ourselves today. There is nothing wrong in owning this, in admitting this. And this uncertainty is common to all parties. Since we have had a consensus on foreign policy right from the beginning, it is good that all the speeches which I have had the occasion to listen to are having the same import and same purport in their main essentials. So, I would say that here we are in the quest for a new policy framework for the country, both inside the movement of Non-Alignment as an important country, as the Founder Member

of the Movement of Non-Alignment, and also as India *per se*. This uncertainty and this quest will have to continue in a united manner and we will have to find a consensus on the new role of India in the future.

The Congress manifesto has, to some extent, anticipated the important aspects of the international situation. It has said, and I quote:

“We have succeeded in persuading the whole world to fulfil Jawaharlal Nehru’s vision of a world without competing blocs, a world of *detente*, a world moving towards disarmament.”

Now, We can legitimately claim some credit for having done this, having been important partners in this Movement towards Non-Alignment, towards disarmament and towards *detente*. The House will recall that under Panditji, under Indiraji, under Rajivji and under Lal Bahadur Shastriji, we have continued the relentless quest for *detente*, we have always spoken up for *detente*, we have always spoken up for disarmament and, in fact, we have given our own interpretation of disarmament, our own picture of what we consider disarmament, complete and total disarmament is our vision, and we have contributed to this. Therefore, this quest, this role of India would have to continue and I would like to say that it will continue.

We have also said it is for us to ensure that the ending of the Cold War does not mean domination of any one power centre. Precisely on this point, we have had several speeches now. It will be India’s endeavour to see that the end of the Cold War or the emergence of only one power bloc or superpower, does not mean the subjugation “of all other countries who, on some issue or the other, do not see eye to eye with that superpower”. I have no doubt in my mind that India will have to play that role. It need not be confrontation. There is no need for confrontation. Even in a democratised United Nations, for instance, for which we are making all efforts, there is possibility, there is likelihood of a difference of opinion, and if that democratisation continues on the right lines, India will have a role to play. There is no question of the role of India and similar countries coming to an end. Therefore, what we are looking for is a democratised functioning of the world community wherein the decision is not on the basis of armaments, on the basis of money power, on the basis of other considerations, but on the basis of justice and fairplay, and that should be our endeavour. So, it is the same struggle in a different context, with different tools perhaps, in different fora. Therefore, I do not think that the role of India we have cherished so far will ever end and I am absolutely certain that we will continue this.

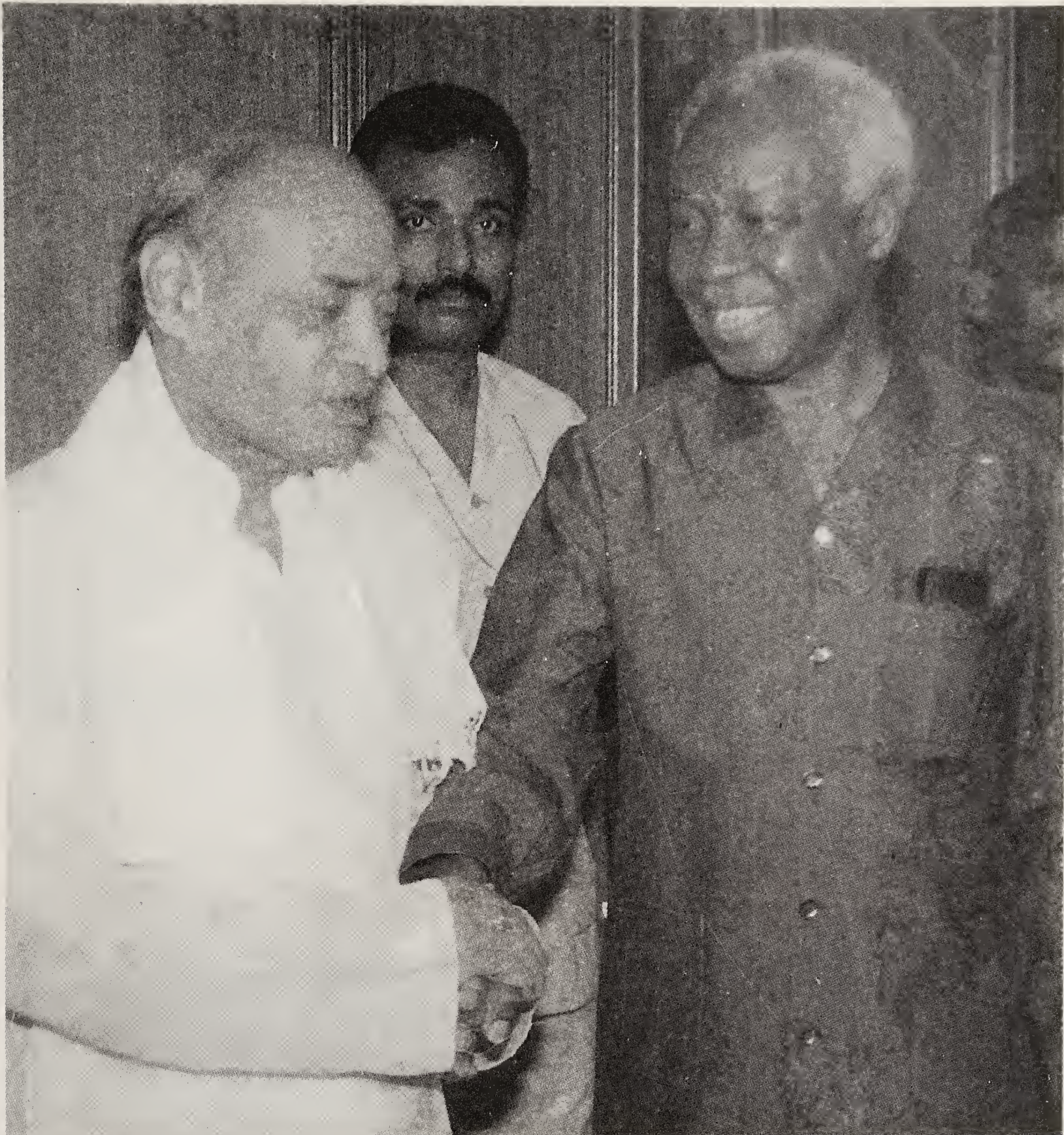
If we have not been active for the last one or two years, let us leave that past behind and look ahead. Nothing has really been lost. Maybe a little visibility of India has been lost. But we can always restore it and I am sure about it.

We have also said it is for us to ensure that the emergence of new economic powers such as Germany and Japan works for the betterment of the poor and not only for the enrichment of the rich. This is what my visit to Germany is all about. We have found that it is not a uni-polar world in all respects. Yes, in the military sense it is uni-polar; but in the economic sense it is multi-polar, it is multi-centric. Therefore, there is really no point in only emphasising the uni-polar nature of the world. There are so many economic power centres in the world. And India is not an economic power centre as such but India has an importance which cannot be ignored by any economic power centre, and that came out loud and clear in my visit to Germany. I am happy about it because it is not simply what we are going to get from Germany tomorrow that we discussed about. It is something much more, it is something much further, where does India stand in tomorrow's set up, the new set up, the new set up of Europe, for instance. Now, I am convinced, I have been assured that India will not be outside that imaginery fortress that will be built in Europe in 1992. I have been assured that India will have an entry into that fortress. I do not even call it a fortress because that was said by those who were the detractors of the European market, the single economy that is going to come. But, when we are told that we have friends within Europe, who will not let India to be left out—not because it is only India that is asking for it, but because India is an important country which nobody can ignore and, therefore, we are assured of India's place, India's entry. Of course, everything will depend on our own performance. It is not as if someone is going to give us everything and we need not do anything on our part. That is where our timely policy changes, our re-orientation of our economic policies, come into the picture. And in the light of all these changes, we find that India is now assured of a place of importance as she always had.

So, it is for us to see that this works for the betterment of the poor and not only for the enrichment of the rich. We have started the concept of G-15 in the Non-Aligned Movement. This is what India has done, almost single-handed, at the Belgrade Summit, where these G-15 countries, that is countries of the Third world, developing countries, can take some lead in all the problems of the developing world, and they could also stand up so that they become an important factor in the economic scenario of the world

tomorrow. This was the idea. And the idea was accepted by the Non-Aligned Movement. Yes, what has happened in Yugoslavia, what is happening in Yugoslavia now, leaves the Movement a little defunct, in the sense that it is not functioning. But at the same time Yugoslavia's importance has not been lost. We have nothing but friendship with Yugoslavia. And I do not know what the Doordarshan is showing. I have no idea, how many minutes it is showing about the happenings of Yugoslavia. But I would certainly like to say that Yugoslavia is one of our friendliest countries. We will certainly see to it that what was started in Yugoslavia in 1989 will continue and we will work on it. We have the commitment to work on it and that is why the meetings of the G-15 is going to be held in Venezuela. And it is going to be an important meeting. Never mind what happens, but it is present for the time being in a particular country. But what sprouted in Yugoslavia, what sprouted in 1989 in Belgrade is not going to go waste, it is going to be acted upon, and I am sure India will certainly play her role in that event also.

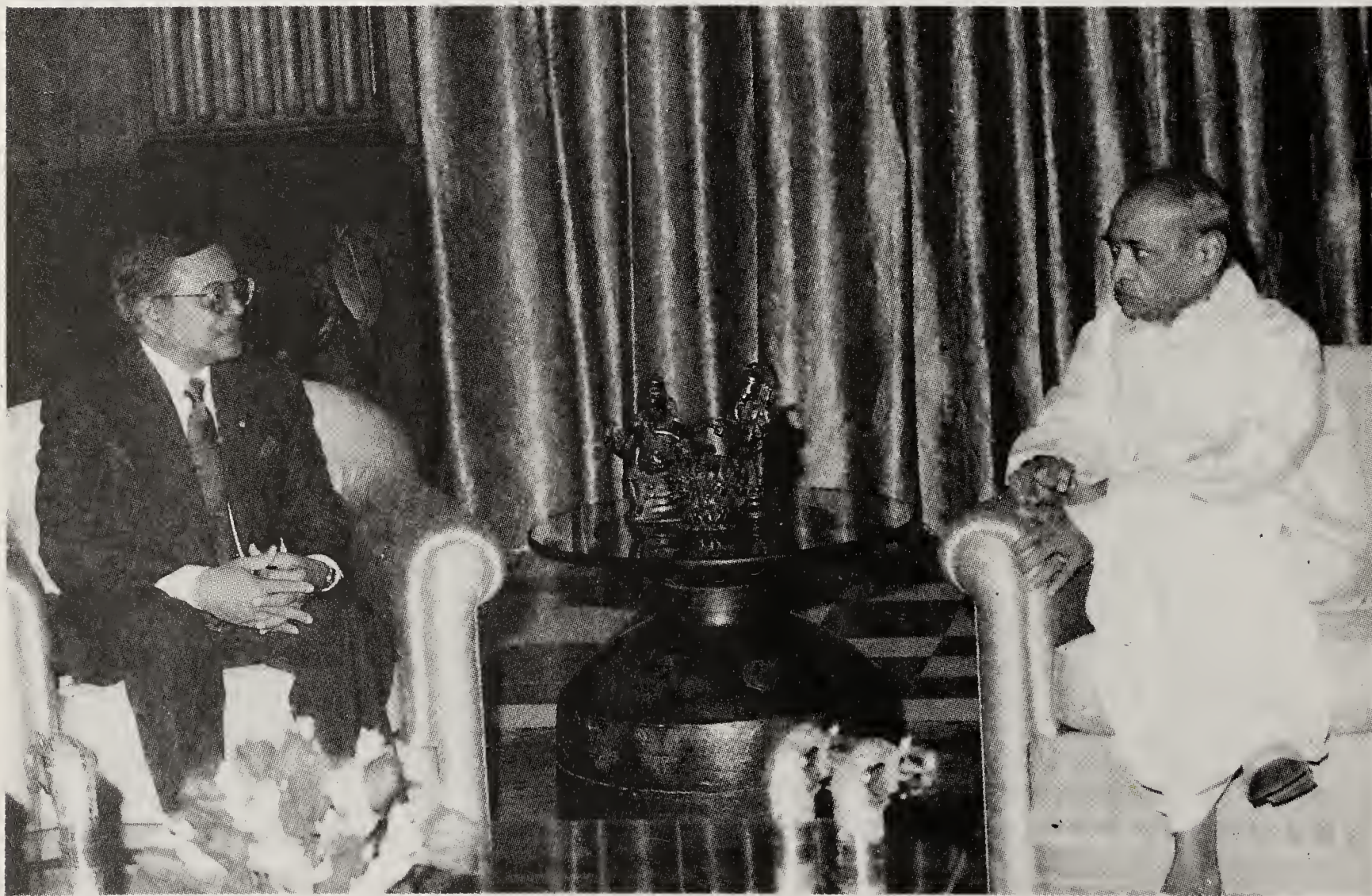
Sir, the new world order based on the philosophy of non-violence initiated by Gandhiji and incorporated in the 1986 Delhi Declaration— what happens to that commitment? We stand committed to that. It is true that we are having disarmament. Much has happened, much more needs to happen in the field of disarmament. The intermediate missiles more or less have been wiped out, and then there is a sizeable reduction in the other missiles and so on. But there is nothing like total and complete disarmament yet in sight. Even today the armaments that they have are enough to destroy the world many many times over. So, what are we really talking about? We are talking about a very slow and very limited amount of disarmament that has been brought about. But what India stands for is total, complete disarmament and not only disarmament in the sense of not having nuclear arms, but a world which is free from nuclear weapons and also it is non-violence. If you completely destroy nuclear weapons today but after 10 years if another kind of weapon which may not be called 'nuclear' but which may be something much more destructive than a nuclear weapon suddenly emerges from somewhere, from some power, then you have not really contributed to that world of non-violence which you talked about in 1986. Therefore, it is not merely the negative aspect of doing away with nuclear weapons, but positively creating a non-violent world to which President Gorbachov and Rajiv Gandhi committed their countries to in 1986. That commitment, Mr. Speaker, Sir, remains, and that commitment India will complete. So, it is not as if India is left without a role.



With Mr. Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, New Delhi, 15 July 1991



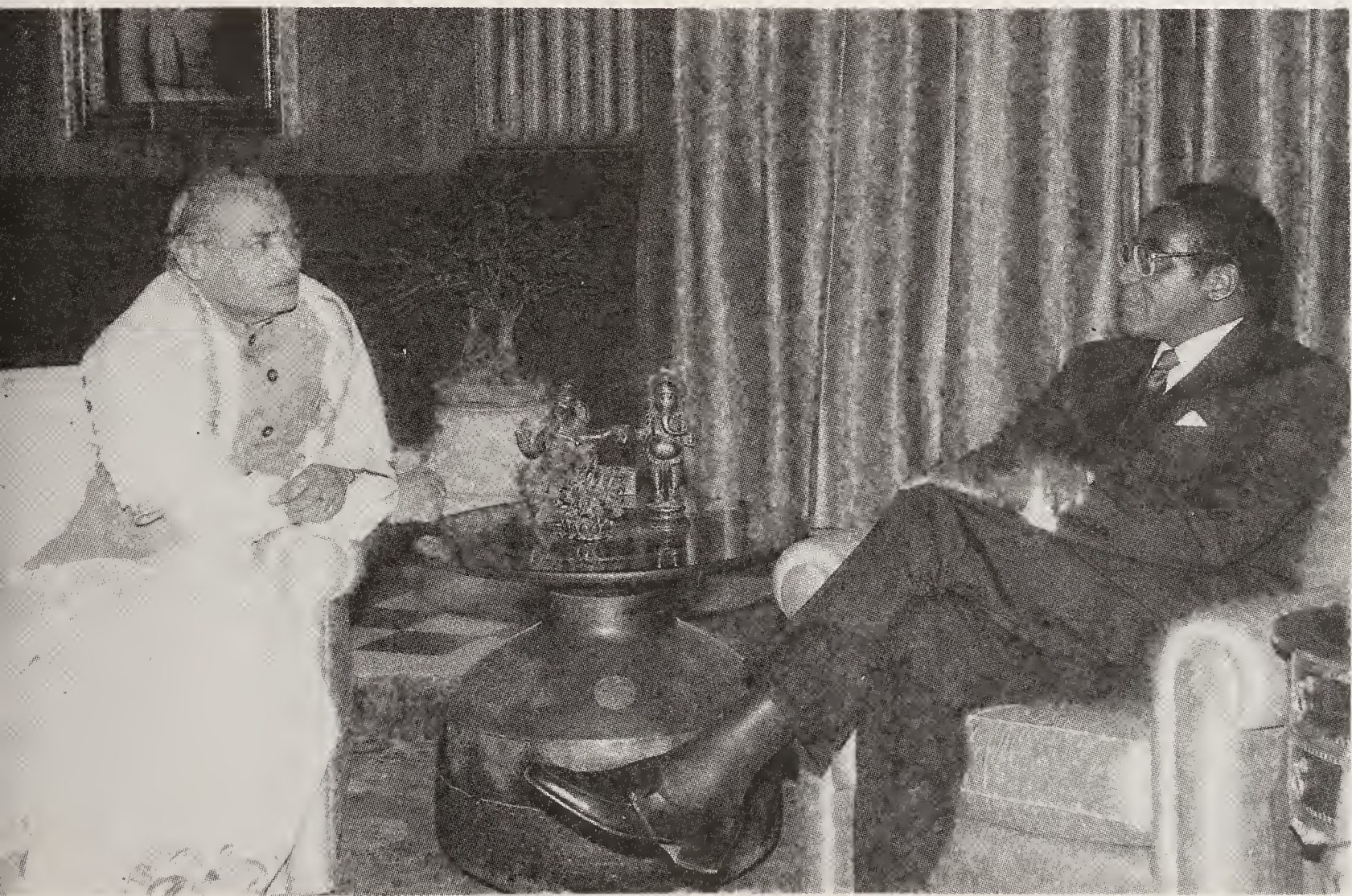
*With the President of Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic
Mr. I.A. Karimov, New Delhi, 17 August 1991*



*With Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of Maldives,
New Delhi, 19 August 1991*



With Mr. Nelson Mandela, 17 October 1991



*With the President of Zimbabwe Mr. Robert Mugabe,
New Delhi, 14 November 1991*



*Inaugurating an International Conference on Youth Tourism,
New Delhi, 18 November 1991*



*With the French President Francois Mitterand, Paris,
26 November 1991*



At the Summit Meeting of G-15, Caracas, 27 November 1991



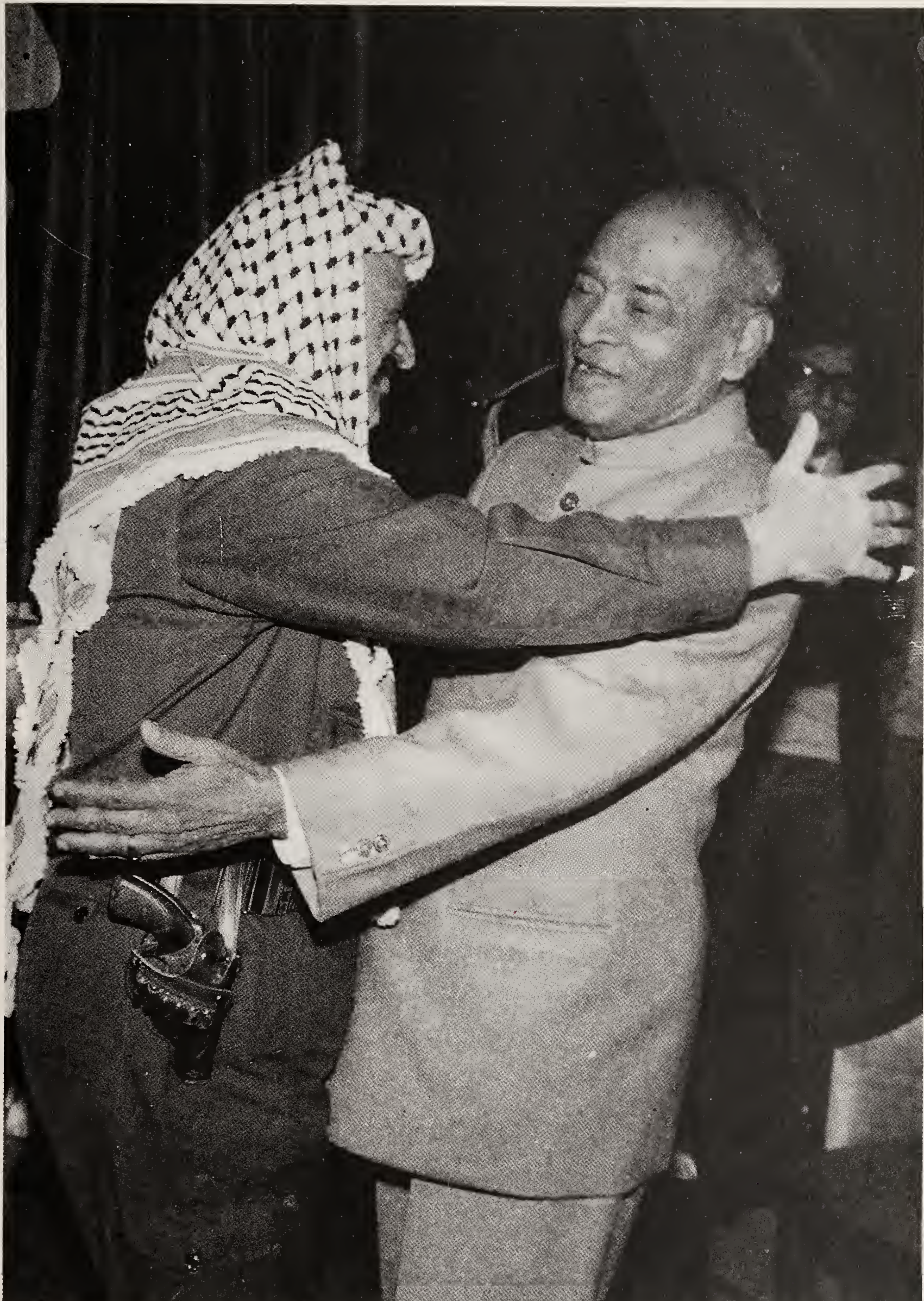
With the Heads of the State at G-15 Summit Meet in Caracas, Venezuela, 27 November 1991



*With President Suharto of Indonesia at Caracas,
27 November 1991*



*With Japanese exponent of natural farming,
Dr. Masanobu Fukuoka, New Delhi,
14 December 1991*



*Greeting the Palestine Republic President Mr. Yasser Arafat,
New Delhi, 20 January 1992*



*With the U.N. Secretary General Mr. Boutros Ghali, New York,
31 January 1992*



*Addressing Security Council Meeting of U.N., New York,
31 January 1992*



With President Bush, New York, 31 January 1992



With the British Premier John Major, New York, 31 January 1992



*With the Austrian Chancellor Mr. Franz Vranitzky, New York,
31 January 1992*



*With the Russian President Mr. Boris Yeltsin, New York,
31 January 1992*



*With the Belgian Premier Mr. Wilfried Martens, New York,
31 January 1992*



With the Chinese Premier Li Peng, New York, 1 February 1992



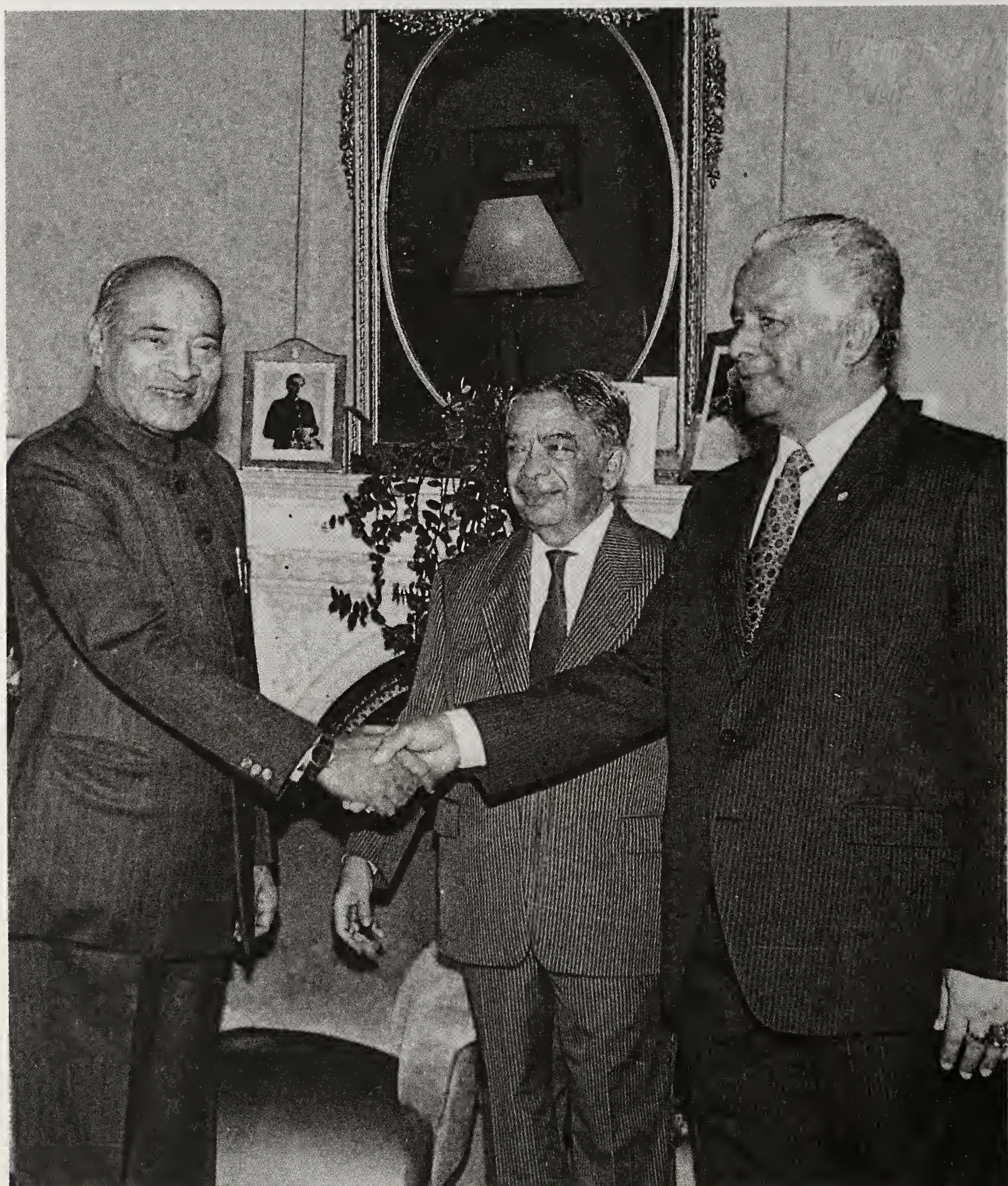
*With the President of Ukraine Mr. Leonid Kravchuk, Switzerland,
2 February 1992*



At the Plenary Session of World Economic Forum at Congress Centre, Davos, Switzerland, 3 February 1992



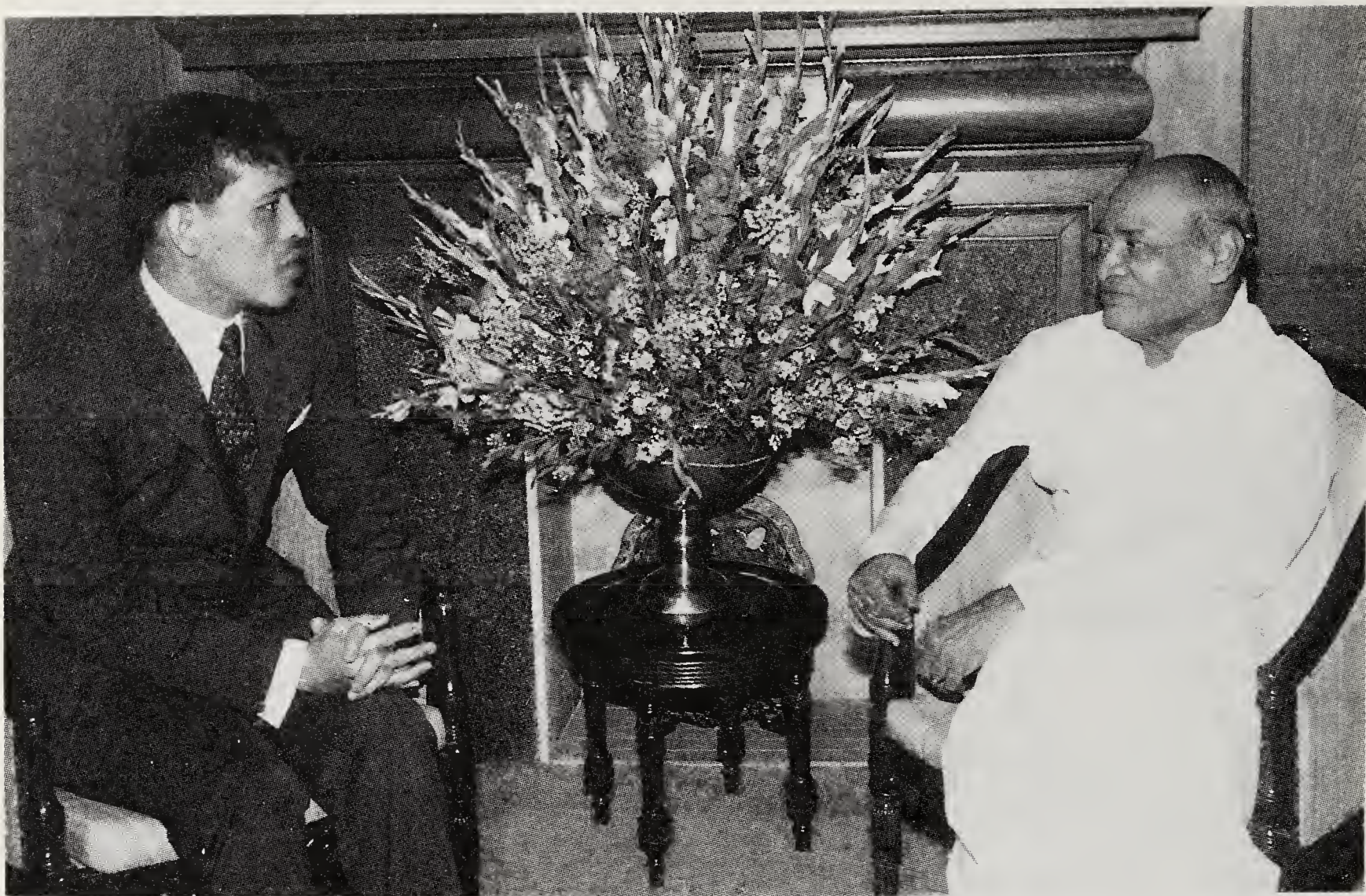
At "India Briefing Session," with the International business leaders, Davos, Switzerland, 3 February 1992



*With the Prime Minister of Mauritius Mr. Anerood Jugnauth,
Mauritius, 11 March 1992*



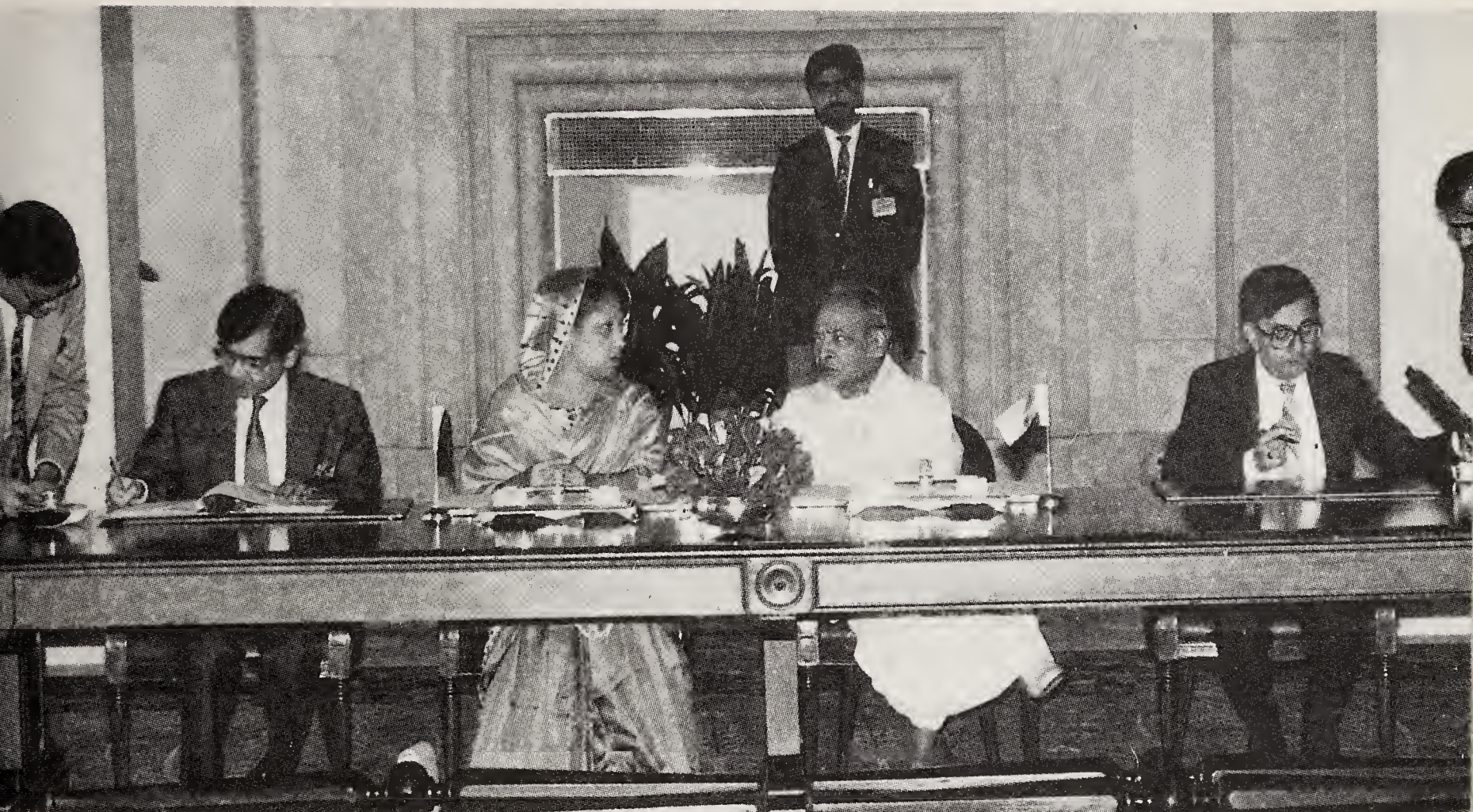
*With the President of Kyrghyzstan Mr. A. Akaev,
New Delhi, 18 March 1992*



*With the Crown Prince of Thailand Royal Highness
Maha Vajiralongkorn, New Delhi, 9 April 1992*



*Greeting the President of the United Arab Emirates, His Highness
Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nahyan,
New Delhi, 29 April 1992*



*With the Prime Minister of Bangladesh Begum Khaleda Zia,
New Delhi, 27 May 1992*



*With the German Chancellor Dr. Helmut Kohl, Rio de Janeiro,
12 June 1992*



*With the President of Brazil Mr. Fernando Collor de Mello,
Rio de Janeiro, 12 June 1992*



Addressing the Global Forum in Rio de Janeiro, 13 June 1992



*With the Chinese Premier Mr. Li Peng, Rio de Janeiro,
13 June 1992*



*With the Presidents of Baltic Republics Mr. A.V. Gorbunov
of Latvia, Mr. Vytautas Landsbergis of Lithuania and
Mr. Arnold Rüütel of Estonia, Rio de Janeiro,
13 June 1992*



*With the Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari in
Rio de Janeiro, 13 June 1992*



*With the Prime Minister of Nepal Mr. G.P. Koirala,
Rio de Janeiro, 14 June 1992*



*With the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Nawaz Sharif,
Rio de Janeiro, 14 June 1992*



*With the President of Portugal Mr. Mario Soares, Lisbon,
15 June 1992*



*Going around the National monument of Vasco de Gama
Portugal,, 15 June 1992*



*With the Japanese Premier Mr Kiichi Miyazawa, Tokyo,
23 June 1992*



With the Emperor Akihito at Imperial Palace, Tokyo, 24 June 1992

Now, we have been again baffled by what happened in the Soviet Union. I have just spoken about Yugoslavia. The Soviet Union is a much larger country, much more powerful and very important country in world affairs, to which we have always been looking for friendship and support, and we continue to have the same friendly relations and close relations with the Soviet Union.

Apart from what happens to the future of the Soviet Union about which I am not as pessimistic as some people are, I would like to say that in respect of our relations with the Soviet Union, about which some people might think that these relations may get shattered, our treaties for instance, our agreements for instance, economic co-operation for instance, might be in doldrums, I believe this is only a passing phase, I believe this is only a temporary phase. The relations between our two countries are not merely based on a treaty or on certain agreements, but we have subscribed to certain principles, and I am quite sure that a large country like the Soviet Union just cannot go to pieces and just disappear, it is not possible. They will certainly find a way of again consolidating the country, may be on different lines, maybe in a different context, but I do not see anything beyond that happening, which would completely disrupt our relations either in the economic field or in the political field. I do not expect that. I cannot spell out anything more, nor can any Members spell out anything more than this at the moment, not even the friends abroad with whom I have had occasion to speak. Everyone seems to be equally uncertain; everyone seems to be hopeful this minute, not so hopeful the next minute. But, we would say, as friends of the Soviet Union, that the relations between the two countries are not going to be disrupted. We will certainly continue the relationship. There may be certain lacunae, instance in the supplies, in exports and in nitty-gritty of our relations. These are important; we cannot minimise the importance of these things. But I understand that whenever we have taken up any of these matters with the Soviet authorities, they have responded with whatever expedition that they could manage at the moment; maybe after two months, three months or four months they would respond more expeditiously. There had never been a cold shouldering on whatever we have taken to them. There had never been a negative response from them and therefore, we have nothing to worry about it except that we will have to wait for the time, when on the other side our friends are able to respond properly. That is all that I have to say about Indo-Soviet relationship.

Then, there was some mention of Burma. The House may recall that we did do our bit in the situation which developed in Burma two years ago. We were, to some extent, helpful. The military

Government of Burma was very bitter about India on whatever we did and I do not see any reason why we should not play a constructive and helpful role in the situation. I would not like to say anything more, because I am not fully conversant with whatever had been done during the last three years, or not done. But, I am sure that the role which we played earlier when there was a big change in Burma, that role naturally will not be discontinued; in whatever manner it is possible, we will certainly do our duty.

Sir, the UN role also has come up for some comments in the debate. I am sure that the UN has come into its own after all these changes. We have had a much more important role assigned to UN in the last two or three years and in this role, in the assigning of this role, in the expansion of the UN role, we also have contributed our bit. There is hardly any speech of the External Affairs Minister of India or the Prime Minister of India which did not emphasise a much more decisive and important role for the UN. We have said even in the case of disarmament, in the case of the verification regimes under the disarmament dispensation, the UN must have a much bigger role. I think, that is saying quite a bit, but we have advocated that role for the UN. We will continue to advocate that. We are a member of the Security Council right now, but that is something which comes and goes. We have suggested the expansion of the Security Council. This may not materialise this year or next year, but this is something which is in conformity with the general views of several countries in the world. The situation in which the original Security Council was formed, that situation has changed beyond recognition. So many countries have become free; so many countries are playing such important roles in world affairs today that the Security Council as it was conceived of 45 years ago, needs to change and needs to be expanded and India is taking a lead in this important role in bringing about or trying to bring about this change.

A MEMBER : Have you suggested anything with regard to the veto power of the permanent members?

PRIME MINISTER : We are concentrating on expansion, I think we do the easier things first. I am not even saying that it is going to be easy, but we have friends in this. We have supporters in this and this would be the better strategy to go about it. This role will continue and I am sure that what we have promised to the people of India, what we have committed to do, we will stand by that commitment.

Shri Inderjit Gupta has said something about the West Asia question. Our commitment to the West Asia question is quite clear. It has been there for years and if there is a conference, we

would certainly welcome the conference. We are for the conference and we have said so in the manifesto. We have taken that commitment to the people and we will stand by that.

About neighbours, I am sure, the details will be given by my colleague, Shri Eduardo Faleiro. But what I would like to say is that we have not been quite successful in persuading Pakistan to improve relations with India. Every time there is a change either in Pakistan or in India, there is a sense of euphoria created, some new hopes are aroused. But subsequently these hopes are dashed to the ground. My own experience during the last three months has been more or less the same. I was told by the Prime Minister of Pakistan that he would like to send a special envoy here. In fact, he was so insistent that I thought that something new was going to happen, something very hopeful was going to emerge. I agreed. The special envoy came. After talking to him, again he tried to create an impression that this is a new situation and a new leaf is being turned between the two countries. Since I was only at the listening end, I was not in a position to respond one way or the other. He told me in so many words, when I raised the question of their helping, training and assisting the terrorists. He told me in so many words that "You will see a definite improvement on the ground." These were his words. So, I told him, "I will wait for the improvement." We have been waiting. I am told that "improvement" has been on the reverse. So, where do we stand? What do we do? We stand exactly where we stood always. We have to be ready for any eventuality but at the same time, we have to persist in our efforts to improve relations to the extent we can. They are raising Kashmir in more forums today than they ever did before. That seems to be the "improvement". So what do we do? I really do not understand, except to come to the conclusion that we have to live with this. I do not have any other conclusion to arrive at. Still let us hope that in the big changes that are coming all over the world where the volition of one country or the motivation of one country does not really mean anything, where all countries are being forced into certain position by circumstances, if this would bring Pakistan to a position more friendly to India, more neighbourly relations, desiring better neighbourly relations with India, then we would be happy. So far as we are concerned, we are very clear in our mind. Our intention is to have the best of relations with Pakistan and this intention will continue and will have to live with whatever uncertainties we have with Pakistan, still hoping that at some point of time, relations will really improve.

With Bangladesh — the Bangladesh Foreign Minister came here recently. He called on me and I had a long talk with him. I find

that there is some promise of further improvement in the relations. We are expecting the Prime Minister of Bangladesh sometime later and we would like to hope that relations will really improve. We have some problems, some intractable problems with Bangladesh like the Chakma question and the latest is that some fuelling of terrorism across the border in the North-East area also is taking place from Bangladesh. Of course, as always, it has been denied. But we are fairly clear that this is happening. We will have to take up with Bangladesh this question also. I do hope that overall, there will be improvement.

There are again some compulsions where the economic situation in both the countries, the economic co-operation between India and Bangladesh is too good an aspect to be ignored. We have been talking with them on so many projects. For the last 10-11 years at least I know that we have been continuing this dialogue. But, on the other side, there has been much movement, much forward movement. But now with a democratic Government on the other side, we hope that there will be some forward movement hereafter and we are waiting for further efforts on both sides and responses from both sides, responses of the right type.

About Nepal, I am told that, again, the emergence of a democratic Government on the other side in Nepal has had some effect, some positive effect. We expect that the arrangements in regard to some of the rivers originating from Nepal, about which negotiations have been bogged down for quite some time, are showing some signs of forward movement. I cannot give more details than this. But I understand generally that there has been some forward movement. Let us hope this movement will continue.

Sri Lanka is going to hold the next SAARC summit and we hope to improve relations with Sri Lanka except that we have the LTTE problem, the problem which has been very much there in India, which has spilled over to India. Then, we have the allied problem of refugees from Sri Lanka whose burden is becoming more and more difficult to bear off our side. These questions need to be sorted out.

So far as other relations are concerned, I do not think there is anything to complain. Specially, the areas of difference, areas of different perception, maybe, will have to be sorted out. These are some of the points I wanted to mention in this short intervention. What I would like to say, in general, is that India's role in the Non-Aligned Movement not only in redefining the contours of the Movement in the new context but also taking a role, an important lead in getting those contours properly implemented, in both these respects, India's hold will continue and this Government wants to

continue the hold as vigorously as we did it before. Within the South Asian framework, the SAARC network, the SAARC — programme we would like to intensify the programme. I understand that there has been a little forward movement, of late, on the economic side also. As the House is aware whenever we brought up economic co-operation, co-operation in the field of trade, commerce etc. in the SAARC, there has been a persistent resistance particularly from Pakistan. Since the ground-rule says that unless all the seven countries agree nothing will go through, the economic aspect of the SAARC co-operation has remained, more or less in cold storage. Now I understand there are some negotiations going on—with what result, we cannot predict. But at least there has been a consent for carrying on negotiations. So, those negotiations on the basis of which some kind of economic co-operation among SAARC countries could be forged, those negotiations are going on. And if they result in something positive, then, I think, the ice will be broken on a very important aspect of SAARC. People have been saying, experts have been saying: Why not have a common market for all the SAARC countries. All these can materialise in course of time only if the initial ice is broken for which I find that there has been favourable atmosphere of late. It may be long haul, I do not know. But if this does materialise, then, I think, the future of SAARC is assured in the sense that not only in other matters like meteorology and other things but on important matters of economic co-operation, there will be real progress.

This is all I wanted to say. We want a little time. This Government has taken over just about three months ago. The moment we took over, we came to Parliament. The directions have been given, the commitment has been reiterated in the Congress Manifesto. The commitment is nothing very different from what the other parties also have committed themselves to do. So, there is an in-built consensus. What remains to be done is to take concrete initiatives in each of these areas. We are on the point of taking further initiatives. We would certainly like some more time to be given to this Government in order to show results in taking those initiatives. I hope, that the House will bear with this Government on these matters. Maybe in the next session or maybe in the next Budget, by the time we come back for the next year's Budget, we will be able to show some more initiatives actually taken, positively taken in many of these matters in which we have a clear commitment.

International Need for Global Solutions

INDIA IS HONoured to play host to the thirty-seventh Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference which has brought together in its capital, distinguished Parliamentarians and Legislators from different countries belonging to the Commonwealth family. This is not the first time that India has been chosen as the venue of this august gathering. We have happy memories of previous Conferences held in New Delhi in 1957 and 1975 respectively. Let me extend to you, distinguished delegates, a very warm welcome to India. I wish you every success in your deliberations.

A Commonwealth gathering is always a remarkable event. It is like a family reunion of diverse nations, cultures and races spread across several continents. What we share and what brings us together are the noble ideals of freedom, justice and equality and common commitment to democracy and its implied values of tolerance and political accommodation. The institution of Parliamentary democracy is another common legacy we all share and cherish.

Here in India, the institutions of Parliamentary democracy are both firm and deep-rooted. We have had ten general elections to our national Parliament and several more to our State Legislatures. The present Parliament is the tenth that has been constituted. We have witnessed several changes in Government and Governments being formed by different political parties, both at the Centre and in our States. We have been through turbulent times. We have had our share of national tragedies, including the recent tragic assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. The path that we have traversed since our independence has not been easy. I am proud to say, however, that we have traversed that path with unwavering faith in democratic ideals and firm adherence to constitutional process. The verdict of the people has always been respected and as a result, the country has seen not only peaceful changes in Government but also proved that democracy provides a resilient mechanism for absorbing and overcoming even the most difficult crisis.

At this Conference, therefore, we participate not only as the world's most populous democracy but as a people with a long and well-established tradition of a functioning and tested Parliamentary democracy.

Address to the thirty-seventh Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, New Delhi, 23 September 1991

The thirty-seventh Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference takes place at a time of profound international change. The old order has vanished. There are new stirrings of hope and optimism. We should welcome the many positive features in international relations. The confrontation between rival military alliances is now a thing of the past. The danger of a catastrophic nuclear war as a result of East-West conflict has now subsided. We have seen the beginnings towards reduction in stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction and a positive trend towards the resolution of conflicts in many parts of the world.

The motive force for these dramatic changes lies in the remarkable upsurge of the human spirit which, in country after country, has been demanding and achieving freedom, openness and democracy. For the Commonwealth family, this is a cause for celebration.

At the same time, there is need to pause and reflect upon the new international order that we want to bring into existence. Should it not also be based on the same principles of democracy that we uphold so zealously within our own countries? As Parliamentarians and Legislators we instinctively appreciate the need to accommodate the inherent plurality and complexity in our societies. The same applies to international relations as well. The wide-ranging issues that concern us today, such as environment, control of drug trafficking, elimination of terrorism and the pervasive problem of poverty, all these demand global solutions. Such solutions will only be effective if they are based on genuine international co-operation; and international co-operation in today's world demands precisely that we respect pluralities of approaches and solutions. Multinational fora such as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference provide opportunities for deliberations on these issues which affect all of us and call for collective responses.

This Conference will deliberate on many important issues. It has a large and varied agenda, ranging from the situation in South Africa to the problems of refugees to collective security under the UN system. Social issues such as enhancing health care, the menace of drugs and offences against women and children, will come under your focus. Environmental concerns will be debated. The exchange of ideas and experiences among distinguished delegates from so many countries will undoubtedly have a positive impact. It will not only lead to enhanced awareness but will also influence legislation for the collective good in many of our countries. There can be no doubt that the cumulative effect will be to benefit not only the Commonwealth Community but the wider international community as well.

May your deliberations be crowned with success.

Welcoming Light

PERMIT ME, ON my own behalf and on behalf of the Government and the people of India, to extend a very warm welcome to all the distinguished delegates to the International Conference on Youth Tourism being hosted by the Government of India under the aegis of the World Tourism Organisation.

It is indeed appropriate that this Conference brings together two dynamic forces which can help reshape the future of humankind. Tourism is a universally important element in our efforts at promoting international peace and co-operation. It contributes to these endeavours by facilitating the intermingling of people of diverse cultures and societies, races and religions. The tourist is also a messenger of goodwill and understanding on behalf of his own country. He acts, therefore, as a catalyst for bringing a divided world closer together. This gives him a place of honour in the development of relations between people across different countries, different continents.

The second great force is youth who are both the harbingers as well as the inheritors of our future and on whom will depend the shape of things to come. Youth is the resurgent symbol of learning and the desire to ever increasingly expand the horizons of human experience and knowledge. They represent the nascent spark which impels society towards change and a reordering of priorities. Youth is the hope for a better tomorrow. At this important stage in international relations, therefore, it is indeed befitting that this Conference should strive to bring about a cohesion between the twin tides of youth and tourism, a cohesion which opens to humankind new vistas of progress, of co-operation and understanding. Besides, once a youth settles down in his job in his own country the chances of his visiting other countries, or even being interested in travelling abroad, is likely to dwindle for a variety of reasons. So it is the youth that can imbibe the spirit of the changing world, better than those of other age groups.

It is also not insignificant that India has been chosen as the venue for this Conference. Ours is an ancient civilization with its history going back to the farthest recesses of time. It is a land of sages and of spirituality with a uniquely rich tapestry of culture,

art, music, dance, tradition and hospitality. It is a land with a glorious past, yet keeping pace with modern times. India is the land which gave to the world the message of compassion, peace and non-violence, the message of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”—the world is one human family.

India has been at the vortex of the major movements which have transformed our age. When India attained Independence forty three years ago, large parts of the world were still held under colonial domination. The restructuring of the world order, the emergence of independent nation states, the evolution of the concept of non-alignment and the launching of economic development programmes aimed at improving the life of the people—these were some of the areas where India was actively involved both through personal example and experience as well as concerted action in world fora.

The people of India have learnt at the feet of some of the greatest proponents of non-violence and universal brotherhood that inequity and injustice are not compatible with peace and stability; that poverty is an unacceptable curse, the shadow of which must be lifted from the brows of men; that concern for the poor, the downtrodden and the socially deprived must be the central function of State intervention, that enduring social equilibrium leaves no room for any form of aggression or human exploitation.

India's message to the world has been keeping in with these time honoured principles. Non-violence and non-interference in the affairs of other countries must form the foremost basis for international interactions; nationalism must be rooted in a sense of universal community, and stability in the world order can be achieved only through an equitable distribution of global productive resources.

The year 1991 had been declared as India Tourism Year, but, as has been stated the Gulf war affected tourist traffic particularly to our region. There is no doubt that after the war travel has resumed, but the growth has still to pick up. Nevertheless, we are continuing with our efforts to promote tourism in a big way, not only as an economic activity, but also as an instrument for fostering international understanding.

Youth Tourism has to be viewed as one of the major initiatives in our efforts to bring people closer together irrespective of their nationality and race. Because of its natural and spontaneous character, youth tourism has the potential of rapidly bringing international communities closer together. The spirit of enquiry and adventure with which youth propel themselves into their voyage of discovery can lead to a new climate of awareness characterized

by a broadening of horizons and the coming together of different cultures and ways of life. Interaction among youth can lead to the withering of antiquated prejudice and rigid postures and the blossoming of new perception of man's intrinsic goodness, warmth and universality, a new and abiding vision of a planet to be cherished by all, to be shared by all.

I would like to relate here very briefly a personal experience of mine which has been very instructive from my point of view. About seven or eight years ago, I had occasion to address a rather large gathering of youth visiting India from countries of Western Europe, United Kingdom and the United States. Mainly, these were the countries they hailed from and it was a large gathering of about five to six hundred students and the youth. I happened to be the Foreign Minister of India and I was called to address them. That was the time when the East and the West, the Blocs, were in eye-ball to eye-ball confrontation. There was nothing anyone could do. All the adults, the leaders of the countries, were talking in terms condemnatory of each other. It was impossible even to imagine that the leaders of those countries could meet, even talk to one another meaningfully and the tension was shattering. It was at that time that this large group of youth came to India and was looking for ideas on non-violence, disarmament. The Jawaharlal University hosted some kind of a symposium on disarmament.

I was a little amused to find that they were talking about non-violence in India, disarmament in India. I told them, "You are welcome to India but non-violence and disarmament are much more relevant where you come from; when you go back, talk to your parents, talk to your uncles, talk to those who are in Government, who are running the policies of your countries. If you can influence your own households in your countries, disarmament and non-violence will prevail in this world". They were quite convinced and I am sure that the decisions that were taken in the later years leading to almost an astonishing change in the attitude of leaders of the world—absolutely astonishing—must have had something to do with the millions and millions of families who thought of their future and the future of their children rather than what was being done at the policy-making level, at the Heads of Government level or the Ministers' level or the war experts' level.

So, the motivation that the youth can imbibe by going abroad, by meeting people who are less fortunately situated, going and seeing societies where strife is not natural, sometimes it is created but the normal run of the society is one of peace, it is quite a new experience for this youth from countries where strife is the engine for progress, is the motive force for progress. The approach, the

different approach, they can find in other countries. And, vice versa the youth going from countries where there is no motivation, going to other countries and finding that the whole country is a beehive of activity and getting motivation of being active, being up and doing for one's own country. Now, this exchange of motivation is the greatest achievement of tourism, particularly of youth.

I want this to happen more and India, I am sure, will be doing whatever it can in promoting this. I am sure that the number of visitors coming to our India, both from merely tourist motivation and also those who are serious minded, who would like to study something, who would like to stay here for a little while, meet likeminded people and exchange views will increase in course of time. There is so much to learn from one another and there is so much about which all of us are equally ignorant and that is the real reason why we should be meeting more and more often to find out if there is any light anywhere forthcoming because light coming from anywhere should be welcome anywhere else. That is what Mahatma Gandhi said in this country and we take that as the motto.

Globalisation Should Lead to More Caring Society

THANK YOU FOR your generous words about me. It is certainly true that the elections that we have had on 16 of this month are indicative of certain trends of thinking in this country regarding the policies that my Government has adopted during the last four months. I do not want to oversimplify the results or the message of the results but to the extent I have said just now, you may please take it as true; we have still to analyse the results in other respects. But election results are one thing and facing certain situations within the country are quite a different thing. We can assure you that we are able to manage on both fronts.

I would like to welcome to India our many foreign guests, specially those for whom this may be their first visit to this country.

Speech on the occasion of the India Forum Meet of the World Economic Forum, New Delhi, 18 November 1991

I see also many familiar faces including you, Mr. Chairman, who is so well-acquainted with India. I welcome them as old friends.

This World Economic Forum-CEI (Confederation of Engineering Industry) meeting is taking place at a particularly eventful time. Opportunities of mutually beneficial interaction between Indian and world industry are multiplying. India is entering into an exciting new phase of development. Eminent industrial leaders like yourselves are very knowledgeable and well-informed about India. My colleague, the Commerce Minister, I believe, has already spoken to you. The Finance Minister will be meeting you shortly. I would, therefore, like to confine myself to a broad view of where we are today and how we look at the future.

My Government took office less than five months ago. In this short span of time, we have acted speedily and with determination to dispel the clouds of despondency and uncertainty which are on the horizon of India's economic potential. The measures that we have taken enjoy broadbased support domestically as I have just said and have been welcomed by the international economic and financial community. While many problems still remain, the outlook for renewed economic growth is now much clearer.

We have introduced a bold programme of economic reforms. We have acted to reduce fiscal deficit and eliminating wasteful expenditure. We have boldly deregulated domestic industry and reoriented our policy to welcome foreign investment in a wide range of industries. In the field of trade policy, we have begun the process of dismantling the regime of quantitative restrictions in favour of price-based signals. The basic purpose of these changes is to inject a new element of dynamism in our economy and to enhance our capacity to deal with our problems of poverty and unemployment through accelerated growth, modernisation and technological upgradation. The impetus and logic of these changes comes from both external and internal developments. The world economy is rapidly becoming more and more integrated and intertwined. Change in patterns of production, consumption and trade are being driven by technology. We want Indian industry to be part of these changes.

On the domestic side, our reforms seek to build on the considerable progress that India has already achieved. Over the last decade, our rate of growth was stepped up to almost twice of what it was over the previous two decades. This has made an impact on poverty and has vastly increased the size of our domestic market. Agricultural production has continued to increase while industry has grown at an average rate of more than seven per cent over this

period. The size of our industry is, therefore, twice of what it was ten years ago. We are at a stage where we can and will fully release the creative energies and talents of our people to accelerate the rate of growth in industry, agriculture and technology. Many of the controls and regulatory measures which had their relevance in a different context have clearly outlived their usefulness and we have done away with them. There is today a broad consensus in the country in favour of economic change. This is evident in our Parliament, in our free and open press and in industry and business circles. While organised labour has expressed some misgivings, I find in fact that they have shown utmost understanding and restraint. This is what I was referring to earlier. Making statements howsoever true, howsoever sincere, could sometimes send wrong signals and perhaps the pace of change that we envisage, that pace itself can get bogged down. So, we have to balance these very real problems, and take an overall view which takes the country forward and does not really bring the political competition, which is inherent in democratic life, to the fore. That has to be kept at a particular level of tolerance and we have to forge ahead. This is the balancing act that I am trying to do. I wish I could go into the details but that is hardly necessary.

Their doubts are not so much on the direction of change but understandably on immediate impact it may have on employment. We recognise this as a legitimate concern and are in the midst of an intensive dialogue to understand their apprehensions and to allay their misgivings. While we are committed to improving the efficiency and the competitiveness of our economy and taking all necessary steps to do so, we are equally clear that the costs and burden of restructuring should not be disproportionately high for any one section of society, especially the section that cannot bear it. The setting up of the National Renewal Fund should be seen in this context. My friends from industry, present here, will permit me to remark that while much is made of problems with labour it is our experience that in actual restructuring proposals before the BIFR, the maximum difficulties are often not created by labour. It is important that people see and experience that changes are being vigorously implemented and have begun to work. The short-term liquidity crunch we faced has been successfully tackled. I hope that the Balance of Payments situation has improved but it has to improve much further. We are gradually easing import compression measures which had become necessary. Here also, there has been some progress but much more needs to be done. When compared to the demand, what has been done by way of easing restrictions on imports forms but a small part.

The policies we have announced are being followed up with determination. Consequential amendments to rules and procedures have been carried out. This again is not completed. As of today, as of now, as of this moment, I can say a lot has been done but there is some area in which I personally feel that something more needs to be done. I am looking into that aspect personally. The new mechanisms have begun to function. Approvals are being sought and obtained under the revised procedures. Government Departments and agencies are being rationalised and streamlined. Many legislative changes have already been put into effect. Some by ordinance which needs to be passed into Law in the coming Session and some are still awaiting legislation. We are looking into how quickly, how soon, we could bring in legislation on those matters. Others are being processed and will be introduced in the forthcoming Budget Session of our Parliament. I am confident that the wide domestic consensus which today exists in favour of economic change and which cuts across political parties will not only be maintained but will be further strengthened. The process of economic reform itself will continue.

We are presently considering the corresponding changes in the financial sector and for evolving a stable tax structure. We are looking into the management and operation of public enterprises. A good deal of attention is being given to infrastructure development. In areas where it has become necessary to augment the resources of the public sector such as in power generation, we have invited the participation of the private sector and are in the process of removing all constraints on their ability to contribute to this sector's development. We are fully aware that there are no shortcuts along the path we have chosen. The process will be long and sometimes painful. Our people are ready for it. In fact, our prime asset in meeting the changes ahead is our people, our excellent human resource at all levels. What is really needed is the skill, the sincerity and the transparent honesty which alone will continue to convince the people of the necessity of what we are doing. The moment they smell something different, the moment they start suspecting the intentions of the Government, that will be the end of all the reforms. So, more than the content of the reform, it is the approach of the Government, it is the approach of those who are running the Government—that approach is going to be exceedingly important in the coming one or two years. This is what I feel about what needs to be done and how it needs to be done.

We will further develop this rich resource as our restructuring programme progresses. We will increasingly concentrate our

energies on family planning and welfare and on improving the education, skills and health of our people. While we reduce some of the burdens which necessarily have been placed on our state sector in the early phase of industrialisation we will now concentrate on those aspects of our social and economic development. It is eventually our people who will keep India in the forefront of the comity of nations.

We see India as a confident and co-operative member of the international fraternity eager to trade, invest and interact with the rest of the world. Happy to benefit from the progress of others, we are in turn willing to contribute to the global prosperity and progress to the fullest extent of its vast resources and the capacities.

The global order, the external environment for development must also be conducive to and supporting this process. Recent trends towards reduction of resources for development, increasing protectionist sentiment in industrialised country markets must be resisted. At a deeper level, one needs to consider what the much talked about globalisation holds in store for the vast majority of people in the developing countries. Globalisation driven by the imperatives of technology is inevitable. As captains of industry and finance, as men and women of vision, I am sure, you would also give thought to how this trend can be moulded so that it results in a more caring society. We cannot close our eyes to the massive problems of poverty, illiteracy and health which still afflict so many parts of the world. Globalisation, therefore, must also have a constituent development paradigm. It is not sufficient merely to suggest that countries should deal with these problems as best as they can while striving to adjust to a fast changing international environment. A new international consensus should be forged to tackle these problems on a global basis. A more direct frontal attack needs to be made by the international community as a whole so that all people and all countries can hope to live in a safer, saner and a more humane world.

This is how we look at the future.

South-South Co-operation Should be a Reality

AFTER THE EASING of East-West tensions in the recent past, one could find a clear tendency on the part of some developed countries to prescribe, in somewhat arbitrary terms, what mankind should do and where it should go next. The new focus, almost exclusively, seems to be on the ideals of democracy, human rights, rule of law, etc. I am positive that no one will deny these cherished values. Many of us belong to ancient cultures that are rooted in the concept of liberty of the individual and accept law as the foundation of the universe. It is, therefore, not at all difficult to accept and adopt the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Besides the legal systems developed in some of our countries are thousands of years old and almost every concept of law or equity of the present day could be found in the principles adumbrated in those ancient texts.

However, our cultures have also laid stress on the common good and looked upon the whole of mankind as one family. They do not seem to believe that the good of some will trickle down automatically and become the good of all. They enjoin that the good of all should be accepted as an objective and that we should consciously work for that objective. This means an undiminished emphasis on all round development. It is, therefore, up to us to ensure that development remains at the centre of international attention in the future, and to persuade our partners that losing sight of the massive problems of poverty, underdevelopment, unemployment, health and illiteracy is not in the interest of anybody. In short, to arrive at a consensus with development as the central concern. Without this essential element, any vision of the future would necessarily remain incomplete as far as developing countries are concerned. It would also jeopardise the very values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, which everyone admittedly wants to advance and support.

There is little doubt that democracy and pluralism are going to be the pattern of the future. But how meaningful will the word democracy be, if it could not deliver the goods to meet the vast needs of food, shelter, health, literacy and employment? The

challenge is, therefore, not so much in establishing democratic patterns, but on making democracy work to meet the basic needs of our people. That is where the centrality of the development process must come in.

Not so many years ago, it looked as though we had reached a common view with our developed partners on these matters. Development of developing countries was indeed viewed as a shared challenge facing the international community as a whole. The industrialised countries on numerous occasions expressed their commitment to frontally deal with the problems of development.

The focus seems to be different now. We are generally told how to manage our economies and to follow set patterns and strategies which, we are told, will somehow ensure that our basic problems will be met. In international discussions and negotiations, the particular problems of developing countries increasingly receive only passing mention or cursory treatment.

It is not that we, as Governments of developing countries, wish to pass on our burden to anybody else. Eventually, it is only us and our people who are responsible for our own development. I cannot state this strongly enough. However, the common vision which inspired the international community in the past, appears to have dimmed.

If this comes to pass, the 1980's would not have been only a "lost decade" as is commonly said, but a period when we may have lost something much more important, namely, a shared vision, a common commitment, and a conviction that all countries and all people must have an equitable opportunity to prosper and to benefit from the tremendous strides in technology, in human capacity and creativity.

This would be a sad denouement. Because today, with the end of super power rivalry, with the possible resolution of many regional conflicts and tensions, there is historic opportunity for devoting all our combined energies, all our talents for a concerted attack on the long-standing problems of development.

Perhaps for the first time in world history a truly global and integrated world economy is emerging. The countries of East Europe are following integrationist strategies. Most developing countries as part of their restructuring process are also aiming to enhance their interaction with the mainstream of the world economy. To a large extent, the globalisation of production, consumption and trade has become an imperative of technology. These processes and trends cannot be viewed in isolation. They are part of a pattern which

affects all of us and the system of international economic relations within which we must all seek our economic destiny. But this globalisation can be fruitful only when a conscious development dimension is introduced and becomes an integral part in the process.

The process of globalisation must be consciously made far more supportive of the emerging trends. There has to be a willingness to deal with issues like financial flows, the debt overhang, access to markets and to advances in technology, so that globalisation and interdependence can be equitably managed in the interest of all.

This is a role that the G-15 can and should play. To articulate a reasoned and pragmatic development point of view, of emerging trends not as “demandeurs”, as perhaps we have done in the past, but in the spirit of making the processes underway truly beneficial for the interdependent world economy and to engage our partners in a dialogue which will enable a common understanding on these aspects.

In the course of the next few months, here in the region of Latin America, there will be two important opportunities in the form of UNCTAD VIII and the UN Conference on Environment and Development, where we must not only bring out our problems, but seek to articulate this development perspective on issues of vital concern to us. Mwalimu Julius Nyerere who has been a source of inspiration to the G-15, has taken the trouble to circulate a note on Environment and Development, which can be a useful starting point in this process.

It is my firm belief, however, that we will only carry conviction with our partners, if we demonstrate our willingness to do more ourselves, not only in national development efforts which are being made to utmost capacity, but also in intensifying co-operation among ourselves. South-South co-operation must be made into an effective instrument in revitalising growth and development all round.

This great advantage and great potential that I see for such co-operation is because in this area we have full freedom to act. We are not limited by the preferences or perceptions of others but can define the content and terms of such co-operation ourselves. We can bring forward our basic problems, be they in the area of population control, agriculture, expanding trade and investment, providing energy sources or whatever else we feel affects us the most and try to jointly resolve them.

I find it very illuminating and encouraging, therefore, that many of the projects decided upon in Kuala Lumpur, in one way or another, touch upon areas of vital concern to most developing countries.

The Indonesian proposals in the areas of population policy and food security are two areas of overriding importance for most developing countries. The Malaysian suggestion to set up an Investment Trade and Technology Data Exchange Centre should lead to mutually reinforcing policies among ourselves in these critical areas. Similarly, the proposal for a payments clearing arrangement together with GSTP (Generalised System of Trade Preferences) could become the focus of a major effort to expand trade amongst our countries. India's own suggestions for gene banks and on solar energy are not only in important emerging areas, but are also indicative of a determination on our part to co-operate with other developing countries in basic sciences and scientific applications.

I pledge India's support to the implementation of South-South projects and the promotion of South-South co-operation. The developing countries of today are not the developing countries of a decade ago. We have developed the strengths to make our mutual co-operation more meaningful and concrete. We should all strive to promote this end.

We have quite correctly and appropriately kept our sights at a realistic level and started with modest beginnings. These projects should not, however, remain only symbolic in value, but must become the focal points of greatly intensified co-operation in these areas in the future.

It is also encouraging that in parallel with this Summit, business and industry representatives from our countries are also meeting. For too long South-South co-operation has been visualised as a basically Government programme. As Governments, we must guide and encourage but it is up to the real economic actors, to move South-South co-operation from the realm of principles to reality.

India and Nepal

IT GIVES ME great pleasure, Your Excellency, to welcome you and members of your delegation on this, your first, visit to India as Prime Minister of Nepal. We welcome you today not only as a

close friend of longstanding, but as the democratically elected leader of a people with whom we share close ties of friendship. We feel honoured to receive you so soon after you have assumed your new and challenging responsibilities.

Much has already been said about the bonds that link us. They go back several centuries and are imbued by the sense of a shared destiny. We are linked by the 2,500 year old message of the Prince of Peace, Gautama, the Buddha. The Nepalese genius for eclectic synthesis merged Hinduism and Buddhism, Shiva and Avalokiteshwara into a single image called Lokeshwara. The Nepali Mahatmya says that to worship the Buddha is to worship Shiva. It is no accident that the Lord Pashupathinath, whose shrine attracts countless Indian pilgrims every year, has five faces. Four of these symbolise the “chaturdham” in India, to visit which is the heart’s desire of millions of Nepalese.

These are not links enshrined in word and stone alone. Our century has given them new vigour and strength. When Mahatma Gandhi led the struggle for India’s independence there were courageous young men from Nepal who responded to his call, and adopted the cause of the Indian people as their own. Foremost among them was the legendary Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala. He was a satyagrahi, who plunged into our quest for independence with the same commitment and courage that he later directed towards the struggle for political reform and democracy in Nepal. He belongs, in the truest sense, to both our peoples, who are proud of his legacy. And your presence here today, Mr. Prime Minister, brings back many old memories of our long association in those eventful years. Ties that bind our peoples together cannot be easily shaken. Nor should they be taken for granted. We should further build upon this foundation, with imagination and vision, with pragmatism and purpose.

The renewed and deepened understanding between us, embodied in the Indo-Nepal Joint Communique of 10 June 1990 provides a comprehensive framework for our future co-operation. Today, with the unfortunate tensions of the past few years behind us, we both know better than ever how important our traditional relationship has proved to be. Yet there have been areas where the stagnation of the past has deprived both our peoples of immense benefit.

The Nepal-India High Level Task Force has taken us forward on this path. Its recommendations are wide-ranging, precise and action-oriented. They cover a number of new projects in Nepal of direct and tangible gain to the people. Energetic, effective and speedy implementation of this programme can, and must, help transform our economies.

In fact, Mr. Prime Minister, we have made a good beginning. The new treaties of trade and of transit and the agreement on co-operation in controlling unauthorised trade are to be signed in a few hours. They will provide firm and long-term arrangements in these areas. In the trade sector, I am happy to announce further concessions regarding tariffs and a substantial relaxation of the access regime for Nepalese exports to the Indian market. The terms of the revolving standby credit arrangement are being improved further. The specially favourable access regime established for the products of approved joint ventures should act as a catalyst in this promising area.

We are confident that the entrepreneurial community in both our countries will fully take advantage of these new opportunities. Trade between our countries is not simply a matter of market adjustment of seasonal or local surpluses to meet intermittent demands. It is a serious and coherent economic activity which, given the open border and common consumer trends, can form the basis of mutually beneficial economic interaction. For a diligent and far-sighted Nepalese entrepreneur, an additional Indian market of 600 million is not beyond reach. India should be viewed not only as a major destination for Nepalese exports, source of capital and investment but as a country committed to Nepal's industrialisation and economic growth. Our shared prosperity will be our common asset.

In the sector of water resources development, the loss over the past two decades in terms of missed opportunity has been considerable. We have now agreed, Mr. Prime Minister, on various specific measures in this sector—covering major as well as medium-sized projects, flood forecasting and warning systems and flood protection works. Their implementation will bring us both tremendous benefits—revenue for Nepal and power for India, plus flood protection and irrigation benefits. Our rivers, whose benediction has blessed our lands, must endure as a source of hope, of well-being and of promise for our peoples.

India has long had the privilege of being associated with the economic development of Nepal. I am glad to announce our decision today to take up a number of projects in Nepal on a priority basis.

Despite our two peoples being so intimately involved in agriculture, bilateral co-operation in this vital sector has so far been sporadic. Our proposed Memorandum of Understanding on co-operation in this area will now lead to substantial work together with its inbuilt potential for promoting employment in our villages and for rural development as a whole.

Mr. Prime Minister, it is a matter of deep satisfaction that we have jointly decided to set up the Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala India Nepal Foundation. This foundation will help promote exchanges in education as also in agriculture, public health, science and technology and in developmental studies. We are happy to announce India's modest contribution of two crore rupees to set up a Trust Fund for this Foundation. The BP Koirala Foundation will be eloquent tribute to a truly great man, whose life and achievements are a precious legacy common to our peoples.

We, for our part, understand that in assisting a neighbour, a nation only helps itself. Your happiness, your prosperity and your progress contribute to our prosperity and our welfare. Indeed, in our relationship, it is difficult to distinguish the "I" from "You". We have decided to build up our relations in this new mould and I would like to assure you that India will maintain this spirit.

Distinguished guests and ladies and gentlemen, may I request you to join me in a toast to the health of His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, to the health of His Excellency the Prime Minister of Nepal and his family, to the happiness and well-being of the people of Nepal, and to the trust and friendship that unites our peoples.

Let us Come Together in the Unity That is Living

WE ARE MEETING here today on the historic occasion of the visit of the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China to India. We welcome His Excellency, Premier Li Peng, his wife and his distinguished delegation as representatives of a great country.

A distinguished Chinese friend of mine once told me the story of how the head of a small European State, with a small population, visiting Beijing said: "Together, China and my country constitute a formidable power. Together, we aggregate 603 million people." Today, of course, he would have claimed a billion.

Speech at the dinner hosted in honour of Premier Li Peng of China and Madame Zhu Lin, New Delhi, 11 December 1991

Certainly, Mr. Prime Minister, the formidability of friendship between China and India is staggering. We constitute two-fifths of humanity. And yet our formidability transcends the word "power" in its conventional sense. Nearly two thousand years ago, Emperor Han Ming-ti sent China's first embassy to India. It sought not commerce nor political influence nor victory in war. It searched for canons of Buddhism and brought to monks in India an invitation to visit China. And so, our association was nurtured in the restlessness of our enquiring minds and the throbbing of our out-reaching hearts.

Two millenia later, our two countries jointly initiated a set of five principles of coexistence—the Panchsheel. They codified the tenets of self-respect and respect for others, mirrored in the rights to territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence. Speaking of these principles, the late Shri Jawaharlal Nehru had said that they created an area of peace—an area that he hoped would spread over Asia and indeed over the rest of the world. Today, the relevance of these principles remains valid. These shared guidelines of inter-state relations define the norms of peace and of human survival. Any international order, new or old, worth its name, should espouse these principles.

It is three years since our former Prime Minister, the late Shri Rajiv Gandhi visited China. That visit marked a new beginning in our bilateral relationship. Shri Rajiv Gandhi had spoken feelingly in Beijing of our common quest for peace among peoples and co-operation among countries. He spoke of our mutual obligation to a common humanity. Today, his words still echo in our minds and enable us to look beyond the past, forward to the future.

We are neighbours. Geographical inevitability is the elemental factor in our relations regardless of the ups and downs in them. Our thoughts and our cultures have intermingled with each other through history. This confluence of influences, of art and culture enriched our civilizations. There is a lesson to be learnt from these, our ancient interaction, for it conveys the imperatives of good neighbourliness, of fruitful dialogue, of peace and of progress, which should characterise our relations.

Excellency, you and Madam Zhu are visiting us thirty one years after the visit of the late Premier Zhou Enlai to India. Much has happened in these three decades. There was an unfortunate period of estrangement between us. Our initial closeness, and the momentum of our mutual endeavour were lost. Differences over the border created serious strains in our relationship. This was regrettable for our two countries, for our two peoples and for the

world. This period is now behind us. During the last decade both our governments have taken resolute steps to resume our dialogue, and our co-operation in diverse spheres. It is the future that now beckons to us. The precious civilizational concepts of “harmony” and “consensus”—goodwill and sensitivity to each other’s concerns—can show us the way.

We face common tasks and common challenges in a world in ferment and rapid change. The government and people of India sincerely desire to strengthen our understanding and co-operation with China. We wish to nurture our relationship as two countries which stand for peace and development.

My Government is committed to seeking a fair and reasonable solution to the boundary question which is in consonance with the dignity and self-respect of each country. I believe that our two sides can find such a solution through peaceful means. I believe that future generations of our people should not find either of us wanting in this regard. Our approach must necessarily be positive, and practical, it must take into account historical data, tradition and custom and also present realities. Above all, we must find a solution within the framework of national interests and sentiments of both sides.

Bilateral co-operation between our two countries during the last few years is making it possible for us to revive the vision of common interest which characterised our relations in the early years of our emergence as truly independent countries. It has helped us identify patterns of similarity, it has helped us exchange information about our experience in the fields of development, culture, sports, science and technology, education and commerce. The vast potential for our co-operation is being gradually activated. Much more needs to be done. Our joint effort will hopefully impart further substance to our relations in these fields.

Together we account for two fifths of the world’s population. Human resources of our two countries must be garnered in order to identify problems of common concern and to solve them for the well-being of our peoples, sharing our experiences and efforts in the process. India and China have a unique reservoir of human potential critical to the frontier technologies of tomorrow. The sharing of experiences was one of the strongest bonds between us in ancient times. The flow of knowledge and ideas between us must now become the fountain-head of a renewed and revitalised relationship. Thus we shall build a strong bridge to our future aspirations.

High level political dialogue between our two countries is of significance because through it we can facilitate the resolution of

outstanding issues, while learning to think and work together. We are therefore happy to receive you in our country and are conscious of the significance of your visit in terms of its potential to further our mutual interests both regionally and globally. We believe that our dialogue must continue because peace and stability in our relations are its dividend.

We meet at a time when the world situation is subject to rapid and fundamental transformations. It is a time when imaginative approaches are called for from the international community to build a durable structure of peaceful and stable inter-state relations based on mutuality of interests and credible guarantees for the survival of mankind. We have to meet the challenges of terrorism, anarchy, fissiparous tendencies and violence. We must replace conflict by dialogue and consensus.

It is the primacy of human and non-discriminatory democratic values and the ideal of the common good of mankind that must guide us in the establishment of any new world order. Our goal as we move into the twenty-first century should be one of global co-operation which removes misery, inequity and inequality from the face of the earth. The efforts of both the developed and developing countries must be in this direction if we are to structure a world of peace, justice and progress.

We believe that the recent changes in the world situation have only served to further highlight the validity of the concept of non-alignment. Its roots lie truly in constructive national impulses that seek an independent and positive role in the world. It connotes a desire for freedom in judgement and in action, in consonance with full sovereignty of nations and in recognition of their equality. And quite remarkably, the Non-Aligned Movement is a standing example of decision-making by consensus. It has succeeded consistently so far. I am citing this example because I am convinced that consensus promises to be the methodology of the future when neither imposition by force nor imposition by numbers alone will yield satisfactory results. And results are what the people will demand, first and last.

Together, India and China, must address the common problems that lie before us—the problems of population, environmental degradation and economic development. I believe that the demands of our times is for reconciliation, consensus and the cognizance that our own interests lie in the reconciliation of the interests of all. If we are able to remove the threat of war and conflict, we shall, in the phrase of Jawaharlal Nehru, “have served our generation well.”

Speaking of China and India, the great poet laureate Rabindranath Tagore said, "The most memorable path of human history is that of a path opening, not for clearing of a passage for machines or machine guns, but for helping the realisation by races of the affinity of their minds, their mutual obligation to a common humanity." The threats of war and conflict have not been removed from our world. Disarmament is the only viable answer for ensuring the security of future generations. We cannot do less for peace.

The co-operation and friendship of Asia's two largest nations would be a powerful and enduring factor in promoting peace and stability in our continent and the world. Your visit, Excellency, retraces and revives the ancient tradition of creative interaction between the peoples of India and China and contributes to the establishment of new channels of co-operation. Let us fulfil our respective national destinies in co-operation with each other. And again in the words of Tagore : "Let what seems a barrier become a path, and let us unite not in spite of our differences, but through them. Let all human races keep their personalities, and yet come together, not in the uniformity that is dead, but in the unity that is living."

Need for National Consensus on Foreign Policy

EVENTS IN THE world have continued to move at a rapid pace since I intervened in the discussion on the international situation in the Lok Sabha on 18 September 1991. I had, on that occasion, recalled the Congress Party manifesto and Jawaharlal Nehru's vision of a world without competing blocs, a world of detente, a world moving towards disarmament. And yet, the lowering and elimination of East-West tensions, and the renewed quest for solutions to sub-regional and regional conflicts, have not brought solutions to the

Statement in the Parliament on the Commonwealth Heads of the Government Meeting (CHOGM) 16-22 October, the Second Meeting at the Summit Level Group on South-South Consultation and Co-operation (G-15), Caracas (27-29 November 1991), the visit of the Prime Minister of Nepal (5-10 December 1991) and the visit of the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Li Peng (11-16 December 1991)

basic and fundamental problems of development faced by the large majority of countries.

The world today is in a state of ferment and in metamorphosis. The bewildering pace of developments, the reorientation of ideologies governing societies and their interaction constitute problems and pose challenges. My Government stands ready to both adapt to the changing international environment and to utilise foreign policy as an instrument to further our national interests in a dynamic manner.

The last three months have been eventful. In overall terms, the three overriding priorities of our foreign policy are: (i) preventing any threat to the unity and territorial integrity of India, (ii) ensuring geo-political security by creating a durable environment of stability and peace in our region, (iii) creating a framework conducive for the economic well-being of our people by encouraging a healthy external economic environment and (iv) trying to restore, internationally, the centrality and criticality of development in the evolution of political and economic policies all over the world. We have addressed these by carefully nurturing and strengthening our bilateral relation with other countries, and by participating consciously and effectively in multilateral forums in whose work and success we have a critical stake. We participated in the meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government in Harare in October and the Second G-15 Summit in Caracas in November. We received the Prime Ministers of Nepal and China in December. This eventful interaction deserves, in my opinion, a comprehensive statement to this House.

CHOGM

The central theme of the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Harare was the future role of the Commonwealth in the 1990s and beyond. The objective of this exercise was to identify the strengths of the Commonwealth, examine its relevance in a changing world and determine priorities for the future. There were naturally divergences between developed and developing countries regarding their perception and priorities for the future. Some of the developed countries are keen to see the multilateral agenda concentrating on emphasis on political pluralism, human rights and democratic practices. These are sought to be integrated under the umbrella concept of “good governance”. India has a proud track record in the area of political pluralism and democratic functioning. Our society cherishes, and is in turn structured on, these basic human rights and values. We support an international focus on such issues. However, this cannot be at the expense of

basic issues relating to development and economic co-operation. More important, given the cultural specificities of individual countries, norms and standards developed over decades in one part of the world cannot be mechanically applied to another. Also, the desire to pursue such values should not result in the imposition of non-economic conditionalities to development assistance. The Harare Declaration reflects this view of India's which emerged, eventually, as the accepted Commonwealth consensus.

G-15 Summit

At the G-15 Summit in Caracas, our objective similarly was to ensure that there is a convergence of opinion, at least amongst the members of the G-15, on the need to restore the emphasis on development co-operation the multilateral agenda. I was invited to be the lead speaker on the need for a new international consensus on development. The joint communique adopted by Heads of State/Government fully reflects such a need. The second G-15 Summit was also significant because it resulted in the adoption, and directives for implementation, of a number of specific South-South co-operation projects. These include two Indian projects relating to the establishment of gene banks and solar energy application. These projects will give economic and technological content to South-South co-operation which will be further enhanced through annual gatherings of business representatives. The parallel meeting of businessmen in Caracas brought together over 240 senior representatives from the G-15 countries.

We have reason to be satisfied with the outcome of the Second G-15 Summit. We were invited to host the 1993 Summit in New Delhi. We have accepted.

Nepal P.M.'s Visit

The visit to India of Prime Minister Koirala of Nepal earlier this month ushers in a qualitatively new era of co-operation between India and Nepal. The discussions held and agreements reached addressed many mutual concerns and cleared many issues. All the meetings were held in an atmosphere of great warmth, cordiality and sincerity. They resulted in a number of important decisions aimed at deepening and expanding mutually beneficial co-operation between Nepal and India.

An Indo-Nepal Treaty of Trade, an Indo-Nepal Treaty of Transit and agreement for co-operation in controlling unauthorised trade have been signed. The Trade Treaty includes several new facilities and concessions which should substantially boost Nepalese exports to India if fully exploited by Nepalese trade and industry. The

Transit Treaty further simplifies customs and other procedures for Nepal's transit cargo. Both sides have committed themselves to co-operating fully to control the growing menace of smuggling that seriously affects the Indian economy.

Water resources development has the maximum potential for revolutionising the Nepalese economy and also benefiting India. We hope that the number of decisions that have been taken concerning the Karnali, Pancheswar and Kosi hydel projects, the medium sized projects like the Burhi Gandaki, flood forecasting and flood protection schemes, power exchange etc. will lead to early and substantial progress in this sector. What is significant is that these projects are, and will be, equally beneficial to the peoples of Nepal and India.

A specially favourable access regime to the Indian market has been provided for the products of approved Indo-Nepal joint ventures. This should help promote industrial co-operation and also the industrialisation of Nepal. At the same time, the causes for the stagnation or failure of the existing Indo-Nepal joint ventures will be studied and necessary corrective measures taken.

As requested by the Government of Nepal, a number of new Indian aid projects, in the fields of health, roads, railways and telecommunications will be taken up within the availability of our own financial resources. This represents a continuation of our longstanding tradition of assisting Nepal with its economic development to the best of our ability.

Again in response to a Nepalese request, agreement has been reached on co-operation in agricultural science and technology, research, processing of cash crops and agro-based industries among other areas. These programmes would help promote rural development and rural employment in Nepal. Specific measures have also been identified for promoting co-operation in civil aviation and tourism.

In homage to the memory of the great Nepalese patriot, freedom fighter and statesman, the late Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala, who was also deeply involved with the Indian struggle for independence, both countries have decided to jointly establish a BP Koirala India-Nepal Foundation. This Foundation will work to promote not only educational and cultural exchanges but also co-operation in science and technology, agriculture and other development oriented fields. The Government of Nepal and India will contribute equally to the Trust Fund for this Foundation, to the extent of Rs. 2 crores each.

Thus, a durable framework has been established for co-operation between the two countries. Our objective is to truly revolutionise our

bilateral co-operation. We stand at the threshold of a new era in our relations with Nepal, full of new possibilities. It is for us, the two Governments, to ensure that we do not deprive our peoples of the benefits of such co-operation, which are their due. From our side, there will be no lack either of effort or commitment. I am certain that our approach will be fully reciprocated. Here again, I submit, a conscious effort has been made to concentrate on areas of development.

Visit of Mr. Li Peng

As the House is aware, the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China Mr. Li Peng, visited India from December 11 to 16. This visit by a Chinese Premier taking place after a gap of more than 31 years has naturally generated interest in the House as well as in the country in terms of its impact on Sino-Indian relations and on regional developments. The interaction between two important Asian countries like China and India also has significant implications in the international sphere. I wish to take the House into confidence about the discussions held during the visit.

Premier Li Peng was accompanied by Foreign Minister Qian Qichion and Foreign Economic Relations and Trade Minister Li Lanqing and other senior officials of the Chinese Government.

Mr. Li Peng's visiting our country and the detailed exchange of views which we had with him on matters of mutual interest and concern gained added significance because the visit has taken place in the context of the on-going rapid changes in international relations involving a fundamental transformation of States and societies in Eastern Europe, progress towards integration taking place in Western Europe and the changing equations in international political and economic relations. We had wide ranging discussions on bilateral, regional and global issues.

Mr. Li Peng availed of the opportunity of his visit to call on the President Shri R. Venkataraman and the Vice-President Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma. The Foreign Minister of China had detailed discussions with our Minister of External Affairs Shri Madhavsingh Solanki. There were also separate meetings between officials of the two sides. I am glad also that the Prime Minister of China, like the Prime Minister of Nepal, had opportunity to meet leaders from our political parties and several Members of Parliament.

In our discussions on the international situation, Premier Li Peng and I agreed that the five principles of peaceful coexistence, jointly initiated by India and China in 1954, were essential norms for the

conduct of international relations and that all countries, regardless of their size, strength or stage of development, were equal members of the international community. It was our common position that the use of force or threat of force as a means of settlement of disputes should be firmly abjured in international relations. The economic imbalance between the developed and developing world had become more serious. Developing countries would not only need to take a common stand in their dialogue with the North, but become more collectively self-reliant. The role of the United Nations should be strengthened.

On the outstanding question of the boundary between our two countries, both the Chinese Premier and I agreed that efforts should be intensified to find an early, fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to this question. We expressed our satisfaction that peace and tranquillity had been maintained in the border areas. We stressed that our differences on the boundary question should be reduced and that we should maintain our contacts with each other in order to provide directions to the Joint Working Group that was set up to deal with this question in 1988. I expressed the conviction that the resolution of this question would be a signal achievement for the two countries and a vindication of the five principles of peaceful coexistence. The next meeting of the Joint Working Group will be held as early as possible in 1992 and meetings between the military personnel in the border areas to sort out local issues will be held on a regular basis.

A number of bilateral agreements have been signed during the visit. These include the agreement on restoration of the Consulates General in Shanghai and Bombay and the memorandums on the resumption of border trade and on co-operation in the field of outer space sciences. We have agreed to intensify our co-operation in such fields as agriculture, public health, energy and education. It has been agreed to hold a Festival of India in China. A Festival of China will also be held in India.

On the issue of Tibet, our long standing and consistent position was clearly reiterated. Tibet is an autonomous region of China and we do not allow Tibetans to engage in anti-China political activities in India. This does not in any way conflict with the religious and cultural affinities we have had with Tibet through the centuries, which I pointed out in our discussion. Our respect for His Holiness the Dalai Lama as a religious and spiritual leader remains constant. The approach to such questions should be consensus oriented through political dialogue. The Chinese Prime Minister indicated that all issues except that of the independence of Tibet are open to negotiation with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

We conveyed to the Chinese side our concerns about the supply of sophisticated arms and defence technologies to Pakistan and Pakistan's role in fomenting terrorism and subversion in the States of Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir. The Chinese Government is opposed to terrorism since it does not solve problems and only sharpens existing contradictions. They have said that they do not wish to see conflict and are for the peaceful settlement of differences between India and Pakistan. Our concerns about Chinese arms supplies to Myanmar have also been conveyed. We have referred to the fact that the vast majority of world opinion favours the restoration of democratic rule in Myanmar in consonance with the aspirations of its people.

The issue of human rights figured in our dialogue. I stressed our adherence to the concept of the indivisibility of all human rights. At the same time, I expressed the view I had put forth in both Harare and Caracas that no country should be denied assistance in the name of human rights. Norms for human rights cannot be determined unilaterally and externally. Primacy should be given to the task of development. The Chinese Premier was of the opinion that the issue of human right should not be used as a lever for interference in the internal affairs of countries.

China is our biggest neighbour and we are drawn to both by geographical inevitability and by the tradition of historical interaction. We look forward to the future in our relations with China. Our dialogue must strengthen mutual understanding and enable the peaceful resolution of all outstanding issues. I believe the visit of the Chinese Premier has been an important step in that direction. I have invited General Secretary Jiang Zemin of the Chinese Communist Party to visit India. Our President has been invited to visit China and Premier Li Peng has also extended an invitation to me to visit his country. Today, in a volatile and changing international situation, I believe that our two countries which represent a third of humanity, can and should play an important role in the promotion of peace and development in the world.

The approach to this visit was to discuss the border on the one hand and, at the sametime co-operation in other areas of mutual interest on the other. Among these other fields of mutual interest, there are two categories; one bilateral and the second, in the international field in the common interest of humankind. India and China, as two ancient civilisations, can do no less. It is their duty to the world. I fervently believe it. This international aspect has always been important and will always be so. But at the present juncture, when the world is in the throes of unprecedented changes,

I think this particular duty to mankind is also urgent. It brooks no delay. I believe that the future of a vast chunk of humanity, living in developing countries and groaning under conditions of poverty and want, is at stake now as perhaps never before. India and China owe this duty to this vast chunk of humanity.

In conclusion, may I share with Honourable Members the linear wave, the logic which has underpinned the orientation of our foreign policy as reflected in the important events on which I have just reported. It is primarily to maintain the ideological integrity of our secular pluralistic polity. It is to safeguard our national cohesion and territorial integrity in a world in ferment, and against challenges emanating from ethno-religious, economic and segregationist socio-cultural impulses. It is to ensure the basic well-being of our people by maintaining the necessary emphasis on the primacy of development the world over, particularly in the developing countries. This leitmotif of our foreign policy, as I conceive of it, is not uni-dimensional in the narrow nationalistic sense. The leitmotif is to structure a regional and international order based on harmony, consensus, a willingness to strive for peace and readiness to converge on basic issues and needs of mankind. This factor was common to these four events the tangible result yielded by each of practical measures that can affect, and enhance, the quality of life of peoples.

It is my firm conviction that our participation in the two multilateral gatherings in Harare and Caracas and the visits to India of the Prime Ministers of Nepal and China constitute a meaningful and structured approach to the fulfilment of our international objectives and obligations and safeguarding our national interests. The Minister for External Affairs and I shall continue to keep honourable Members informed about developments on the foreign policy front periodically. I believe that we will continue to need a national consensus on major foreign policy issues. In this, the contribution of honourable Members can never be over-emphasised.

SAARC Nations—Inheritors of a Great Past

WE ARE HAPPY, Mr President, to be here in your beautiful country. Ties woven by history bind our peoples. Our friendship today has strengthened them, our shared aspirations given them vigour and direction. We thank the people of Sri Lanka and your government for the warmth of your welcome.

To you, Mr. President, our felicitations on your assumption of the Chairmanship of SAARC. You will have India's fullest co-operation in our mutual endeavour to strengthen SAARC on the basis of our Charter. To President Gayoom our deep sense of appreciation for his contribution as Chairman in imparting fresh thrust to our co-operation. He has discharged his high responsibilities with dedication, diligence and determination. We are grateful.

Mr. Chairman, our world is being transformed before our eyes. South Asia may, geographically, seem at the periphery of this change, but it cannot allow itself become peripheral. Opportunities for a more peaceful and prosperous world are within our grasp; yet the danger of a return to the acquisitive politics of the nineteenth century cannot be ruled out. This makes imperative our effort for a world in which relations among nations will be based on equity, justice and the rule of law, within the framework of a more democratised United Nations.

Power, in its conventional sense, cannot be balanced when nations are dependent upon each other. We must visualise, instead, a world where the individual power of nations aggregate a common, collective global power which can address itself to the resolution of problems which have consistently preoccupied the mind of man. Such power must be defined not in indices of force or the strength of numbers but by the human and material potential with which each nation is blessed.

SAARC must adapt itself, with vision and understanding, to developments outside our region. Integrationist tendencies are clearly evident in the world economy. World trade could well be fragmented, the international trading system undermined. We see the formation of regional blocs and groupings among developed countries. We are told that these groupings would be outward

looking and would increase trade. But there is also the apprehension that the outcome could well be discriminatory, particularly in the medium and short run.

Developing countries need an effective safeguard and the means for furthering their development and strengthening their economies. Regional economic co-operation can help fulfil this need and provide some of these means. In this context, we attach great importance to co-operation within our region. Besides, the SAARC Charter declares that such co-operation shall not be a substitute for bilateral and multilateral co-operation, but shall complement them. In fact, the two could be mutually reinforcing.

Development in our region, and in our countries, has been uneven. Our balance of payments are asymmetric. Resources are constrained. Pressure from inflation impinge upon us. These are some of the problems. Then there are the challenges. Poverty must be eradicated, and if that is to be, population growth must be limited. Literacy must empower our citizens to shape the development processes as full participants and not merely as witnesses or beneficiaries. Disease must effectively be prevented or cured. Our air, land and water must be made pure. Opportunity for, and the means to, a life worth living must be assured.

Our Association has now been in existence for six years. Its very first declared objective is the welfare of our peoples and the improvement of their quality of life. I do not intend to catalogue our achievements; these are several. Above all, the past six years have provided the means for us to learn from one another's experiences. This itself has been a rewarding experience.

Progress has been made in the areas of functional co-operation identified at the successive Summit Meetings. But we can do more. Our operational activities must be geared and directed increasingly to development concerns that touch the lives of our peoples. More substantive areas must be identified for such co-operation. Only this can assure the realisation of our objectives.

Our co-operation must ascend to the truly regional, as distinct from a mere sum total of bilateral arrangements. We should not be diffident of newer forms of co-operation. Collective economic security can assure benefits not necessarily confined to the economic field. What we need is confidence between our peoples, and between our governments, to set in motion a benevolent cycle wherein co-operation strengthens confidence which, in turn, makes for closer co-operation.

Much of the world has already crossed the frontiers of technology at whose threshold we still wait in trepidation. Let us cross them

together. Together, we can raise the yield of crop and grain from our soil. Together, post-harvest technologies can invigorate our lands. Together, we can transform our agricultural wastes into energy. Together, we can make our industries technologically competitive.

Our resources can be collectively harnessed to promote research, development and implementation of new sources of energy, particularly solar energy. We are blessed bountifully by the sun. Our forefathers have written epics about it, our mothers have sung hymns in its praise. Before its energy and splendour, we are but infinitesimal, and yet it has allowed us access to its power and strength. We cannot ignore it, we should not fail ourselves.

The majority of our population still live in villages. SAARC will mean little to them, either as an acronym or an idea, unless they actually see the results of our co-operation. I have in mind projects like rural drinking water and sanitation. This inevitably brings us to the promotion of public health. Our countries have a very rich tradition in traditional medicine and therapy. This tradition is rooted in the special conditions prevailing in our region. I am convinced that we can promote better health amongst our people if we can pool our experience in traditional medicine and truly bring to bear the wisdom of our past on the compulsions of our future.

Our officials could examine such ideas intended to facilitate and augment economic and technological co-operation amongst our countries. I am sure they will have the good sense to involve competent and experienced non-officials as well. SAARC is more than a grouping of governments, it is a partnership of people.

The long-term vision of SAARC must undoubtedly include the removal of internal barriers and the free movement of goods, services, capital and peoples throughout SAARC. Sheer necessity dictates that we do more in the area on intra-regional commercial and economic exchange. Pooling of our resources can ensure their optimal utilisation. We must not deny ourselves the advantages of geographical proximity.

Freight costs and energy consumption can be reduced. Wider access to consumers would break the shackles of small market and open up avenues for economies of scale. Joint ventures would help promote trade liberalisation and encourage more detailed forms of economic co-operation. Adoption of increasingly outward oriented trading regimes would lead to greater competitiveness of our economies. An important benefit would be increased contact across the borders at business and entrepreneurial levels, which would mean the intensification of people level contacts.

Half a century ago, Ananda Coomaraswamy had written of our region that the differences between its cultures are rather accidental than essential; the weight of these differences tends to disappear in proportion to our understanding and in the absence of any third party in whose interest it is to emphasise them. He went on to speak of “unities more essential and more important than any political unity, based on common understanding of the ultimate ends of the life rather than upon its immediate purposes”. Standing here in Colombo, one is proud to be part of this fraternity that so eloquently stands testimony to that truth.

Mr. Chairman, after being six years in this Association, it is time to undertake new programmes of joint action with vigour and with imagination, programmes that strengthen us because they promote our well-being. India is ready to respond to this need, to the extent that our talents and resources can benefit SAARC. We place them unreservedly at its disposal. Let us prove to the world and more importantly to ourselves that we are inheritors of a great past, but that we can be the heirs to a greater future.

Need for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

WE APPRECIATE THE initiative you have taken to convene this meeting. Its deliberations can show us a direction, which is indeed important at this juncture. It is good of you, Sir, to have helped us make a beginning.

I should also wish to pay tribute to a personal friend and colleague of distinction and eminence, whom the United Nations has rightly chosen as its Secretary General. To my brother Boutros Boutros Ghali, our heartiest greeting. May I also, Mr. President, recall with gratitude and appreciation the services of Mr Perez de Cuellar, which have left so distinctive a mark on this Organisation.

We miss, today, the presence of a distinguished member of this fraternity, President Mugabe. We grieve with him in his personal bereavement and convey to him, through his delegation, our deepest

condolences. To the President of Hungary, our good wishes for a speedy recovery from his indisposition.

Mr. President, we are living in a time of change, palpable change. Until very recently, the Security Council's effectiveness was inhibited by the Cold War. We have since witnessed an upsurge of democratic sentiment all over the world. We have been touched by the desire in diverse countries that the values of liberty, economic justice and the dignity of man, should govern the conduct of world affairs. These are trends of which our discussions must take cognizance.

The United Nations and the Security Council played the role required of them in recent months because the Permanent Members of the Council adopted a harmonious, cohesive and firm stance in dealing with the threats to the cherished values of man.

India's support to the United Nations has been complete and consistent. It has had no fluctuations. Today, we welcome this fresh effective role of the Security Council and shall continue our support. In visualising its future role, it is essential that we take note of the emerging forces, the socio-political undercurrents that result in unrest, instability and in the recurrence of violence across the globe.

Lasting peace and security necessarily requires comparable levels of human happiness across the globe. It is impossible to think of a United Nations functioning usefully or harmoniously while humankind continues to be riddled with ever increasing disparities and while the world's natural resources, that are really humanity's common heritage—land, water and air—are getting fast depleted by thoughtless acts of over-exploitation and environmental degradation. This is the single simple truth which this organisation has to take note of. All else falls in place, although the overall task remains extremely complicated, even with the best will in the world.

The role of the United Nations must naturally rest on the Charter which incorporates the vital framework for action for maintenance of international peace and security. But the Charter is only as legitimate and secure as its underpinning by the collective will of the international community. At every step, the interpretation of the charter as well as the actions by the Security Council must flow from that collective will and not from the views or predilections of a few. A general consensus must always prevail. What is right and just must become transparent. It is as simple as that. Members of the Security Council, whether permanent or elected, should insist on this consensus, scrupulously avoiding the temptation to dictate for quick results. Besides, while prescribing

norms and standards for national or international conduct, the Security Council must scrupulously accept those norms for itself.

As the composition of the General Assembly has trebled since its inception, the size of the Security Council cannot remain constant any longer. Wider representation in the Security Council is a must, if it is to ensure its moral sanction and political effectiveness.

While implementing its resolutions in good faith, it is incumbent on the Security Council to anticipate all the consequences of its decisions. Some consequences may be unintended, but they can affect those whom they are least intended to affect. For instance, economic sanctions against one country can have a major impact on its trading partners. For developing countries, this impact can be catastrophic. If the Security Council's actions are to continue to command adherence and support, it must take speedy and parallel action to address problems arising in third country from the implementation of its resolutions. Besides, it must act decisively and in time to alleviate human suffering in the country in question, once the primary purpose of imposing economic sanctions has been fulfilled.

Mr. President, I have profound respect for those who are crusading for the protection and preservation of human rights. A country with a history of over five thousand years, with a record of non-invasion and non-annexation of alien territories, with the shining example of a powerful monarch like Ashoka turning into an apostle of non-violence, another powerful heir apparent becoming the one and only Buddha, with a contemporary political system modelled on the best traditions of human rights and liberties—Sir, such is my country. Indian culture and human rights in their loftiest form, are almost synonymous. However, having stated this, we cannot countenance a situation where all human rights are reserved only for the practitioners of terrorism, while governments dealing with this menace are arraigned day and night on grounds of violation of human rights real or imaginary, mostly the latter.

I am fully conscious of the obligations of the State in preserving human rights, as contrasted with terrorist and secessionist elements killing innocent citizens with impunity. What should really be suggested at this meeting, is perhaps, to delineate the parameters that harmonise the defence of national integrity with respect for human rights. In this view, India is ever willing to discuss and contribute to the endeavour.

It is also important to note that the content and nature of human rights are conditioned by the social, traditional and cultural forces

that inform different societies. While the endeavour of the UN, as being intimated in this meeting, is to gradually move towards creating uniform international norms for human rights, such norms should not be unilaterally defined and set up as absolute preconditions for interaction between States and societies in the political or economic spheres. Our endeavour should be to work towards a just and fair world economic order and to encourage countries to move towards universal human rights.

We fully share the concerns expressed by several leaders on the threat posed to international peace and security by the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Another dimension of international security today, is that of the possible loss of control over nuclear arsenals. What we are faced with is no longer the possible acquisition of such weapons by a handful of threshold states, but an uncontrolled spread of ready-made nuclear weapons across the globe, by a variety of means and methods. The proliferation issue has thus assumed a qualitatively and frighteningly new dimension.

While sharing these concerns, we wish to underline, however, that measures of preventive or punitive action on a selective basis will not achieve the results we are aiming at. The sense of disquiet and urgency that pervades the discussion of this issue is precisely because it has now become a global problem and not one of a few potential nuclear weapon states. In this imponderable yet terrible scenario, technical fixes or regional arrangements can no longer suffice. The difficulties of monitoring and policing activities in a large number of States, several of them not even accurately identified at any given time, preclude effective results. The Secretary General cannot, I submit, be expected to be inspecting basements and searching for bombs. This can hardly succeed, as any one can see. There must be some other way.

What, then, is the answer to this difficult dilemma? In our view, the only logical route available to us is to pursue a global approach, based on a new international consensus on non-proliferation. To be effective, this global non-proliferation regime must be universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory and linked to the goal of complete nuclear disarmament.

At the Third Special Session of the UN devoted to Disarmament held in 1988, the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India had put forward a specific Action Plan for Disarmament, which would eliminate all weapons of mass destruction in steps eventually leading to a nuclear-weapon free and non-violent world. The plan contained all the key elements of a new international consensus on nuclear non-proliferation. First, it called for the conclusion of an International Convention on the Prohibition of the Use or Threat

of Use of Nuclear Weapons. Second, it advocated a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Third, threshold States would undertake obligations not to cross the threshold and this would be linked to corresponding obligations by nuclear weapon States to eliminate their nuclear arsenals latest by the year 2010.

Mr. President, at the time this Action Plan was put forward, some nuclear weapon States expressed difficulty in accepting these ideas in view of their adherence to the so-called doctrine of nuclear deterrence. This doctrine was anchored in the specific context of East-West confrontation and the Cold War. The Cold War is now over, the nuclear stand-off is a thing of the past. The doctrine of nuclear deterrence is no longer relevant. We are now offered a historic opportunity to exercise statesmanship and move to quickly eliminate nuclear weapons altogether from the face of the earth. In particular, the ideas India put forward in its Action Plan or any alteration thereof, such as a universal pledge to abjure the use of nuclear weapons, conclude a comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and to evolve a new, universal and non-discriminatory approach to non-proliferation, acquire compelling relevance. It is only within the framework of such a consensus, and through no other means, that the Security Council can deal effectively with the threats to peace emanating from the proliferation of nuclear weapons in its current global dimension. If our meeting today can make a declaration on these lines, we would have made a truly historic contribution to the promotion of lasting peace and security. In fact, Mr. President, I would venture to suggest that even going beyond India's Action Plan, the target date for a nuclear weapon free world should now be advanced to the end of the present century. It would be a hopeful note on which to enter the twenty-first century.

Mr. President, the statement that you will be reading out on behalf of the members of the Council at the end of today's meeting has been the subject of intensive productive discussions. We were happy to be part of the exercise and to have made our contribution to it. We consider it an important statement. However, I find that the statement does not reflect one or two of India's crucial concerns. These I have clearly mentioned in my intervention just now. This, of course, does not detract from the significance of the statement you are about to make and from India's co-operation. Indeed, I trust that today's meeting will spur our common efforts to co-operate to mutual benefit and in the interest of all, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter.

Global Co-operation and Mega Competition

IT IS A pleasure for me to be here this morning with such a distinguished audience. I would like to thank Prof. Klaus Schwab for this opportunity. I should like also to thank him for his warm words of welcome.

I confess that I am human enough to like good things being said about myself. There is even greater happiness when this is combined with good things being said about my country. I endorse your view that India is a great country. The tributes to me really belong to India, to the traditions and values India respects. Consensus is not my discovery. It is in fact the essence of Indian culture. If I am a Prime Minister of consensus, it is not necessarily due to force of circumstances or due to logic of numbers. What I am doing today is in line with our traditions. In fact, being a minority Government has come in very handy to me and has helped me go back to our tradition. Numbers do not count as far as this is concerned. Even if I had a majority I would still follow a path of consensus.

This is no time to rule India by sheer majority. One can get a law passed or can get a vote, but if you can't win the hearts and minds of people, it is not worthwhile.

If you have 45 opposing and 55 in favour, you still can't forget the 45 because 55 do not equal 100. The situation is complicated. There are so many shades of grey. One must have consensus to get the willing co-operation. What I am doing is really working back to my tradition.

I have come here not so much to make a speech, but to know and learn something at this Economic Mecca. I am told that just about everyone who is anyone in the world of business and industry is here. This is a sort of a pilgrimage for me. You don't go and lecture on a pilgrimage. I wish to absorb something instead, to gauge what you expect of India and the Indian Government. In turn, if you allow me, I will explain to you why any particular expectation is wrong or unrealistic. I am here for a dialogue. I will do what I consider right. If you point out any gaps or

shortcomings and they are reasonable, I will admit it right here. I will be plain and straightforward with you. I have discovered that being plain and straightforward has certainly paid off as far as I am concerned.

The Summit Meeting of the Security Council which I attended two days ago enabled leaders from all parts of the world to take stock of the breath-taking changes that are taking place in the world around us. While we may have had differing perceptions about these changes and different ideas on what the new structure of international relations should be, we were united in our conviction that the challenges we face require much closer international co-operation than has been the case so far. We also agreed that the United Nations will have to play an enhanced role in the maintenance of international peace and security, which is another way of saying that there must be greater international co-operation.

The theme of this plenary meeting is Global Co-operation and Mega Competition. I understand this to mean that in the world today there is greater economic competition but also the need for greater co-operation amongst nations.

In answer to the relevant issues raised by Prof. Klaus Schwab I will try and structure my presentation to firstly look at the evolving international situation in both its positive and negative aspects and then try and project to you how India sees its own role in this changing scenario. I will also deal with the economic reform process that India is currently engaged in and also consider the outlook for the future.

There are both negative and positive aspects to these changes:

On the positive side:

- (a) The acute threat of a nuclear holocaust as a result of mounting confrontation between two rival military alliances has receded;
- (b) End of the Cold War has changed the situation wherein regional issues are no longer overlaid by compulsions of East-West rivalry;
- (c) The massive upsurge of popular will across the globe had brought democracy and representative governments to the vast majority of peoples of the world. Democracy has thus attained compulsive and almost universal validity. Looking back over the decades, one can note that this has happened after a long time;
- (d) A new and historic opportunity is now available to nations of the world to bring about a new structure of international

relations, in a free and uninhibited atmosphere. They can now usher in a structure which is equitable, democratic and responsive to the needs of humanity as they are actually found on the ground. There is now an opportunity to put into place a genuine system of collective security based on a more active role of the United Nations.

On the negative side:

- (a) Despite the end of the Cold War and of the confrontation between rival military alliances, nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction still remain in substantial numbers. There is an attempt to perpetuate these arsenals in the hands of a few countries who justify this on the basis of the need for “policing”. The concept of policing is not quite failsafe and many become counter-productive in the long run. Besides, one must guard against East-West confrontation being transformed into a new type of North-South confrontation.
- (b) The break-up of the erstwhile Soviet Union has led to the resurgence of nationalistic and sub-nationalistic trends in several parts of the world. This has happened mostly in areas where the safety valve of democracy was not so far available. This would perhaps indicate one aspect of the efficacy of democracy in diffusing tensions arising out of plurality. What the world has to scrupulously avoid is the temptation to encourage tendencies that can lead to chaos and confusion, political instability and economic crisis.
- (c) There is a danger of a new ideological orthodoxy replacing the old, imposing on our minds and prescribing rigid pre-determined models for vastly different situations. We accept the need for a much wider role for the “market” principle; there should be a congenial environment for entrepreneurship; and there should be fewer controls on economic activity. Nevertheless, for countries where poverty and destitution are pervasive, the state cannot absolve itself of the responsibility to involve itself in economic decision making. It has to accept the responsibility to ensure a minimal degree of social welfare to its people. There are also cultural differences among nations. In our society, for example, an individual is important, but at the same time there is a strong sense of community interest as well. In India, the cohesion of the family, the community and the village is an important value. This is often regarded as a characteristic of a backward kind of country, but this is not really so. The conditions are so different. It is, therefore,

necessary to allow nations and societies to determine their own specific socio-political and economic system even while asserting the universal values of democracy and humanism and acknowledging the greater efficiency of the market principle in most forms of economic activity.

- (d) We are concerned that the new wave of democracy that has triumphed in many parts of the world and the lessening of international tensions, will not be sustained if sufficient attention is not paid to development. Authoritarianism feeds on economic discontent; the foot-soldiers of fascism are drawn from the ranks of the desperate and dispossessed. The democratic spirit is a universal value and aspiration, but strong and enduring political institutions are required to nurture and sustain this spirit. Economic crisis and social tensions cannot provide the environment needed for such institution building. Development, therefore, becomes a precondition for sustaining democracy. It is in our own interest as democracies to keep development at the very centre of international concern and co-operation. It is not safe to assume that development will automatically follow democracy. This combination has to be consciously worked for and brought about.

How does India view these changes in the world and what does it see as its own role in a changing international situation?

India is a self-confident democracy. The Indian mind is democratically oriented through and through. It has combination of individualism and collective wisdom in action, which has been demonstrated for thousands of years. Whether it was a monarch or an Emperor at the top, the Indian society did not give up its democracy and harmony down the centuries. Social life was anonymous, at the same time autonomous. That has given us the assurance manifested in our repeated demonstration of an ability to absorb shocks and crisis and emerge with our political institutions and commitment to democracy, ever stronger. Ours is an evolving and dynamic society. Conflict and tensions are inevitable in the process of social and economic development. They are also the prime movers of change and adaptation. What is important is that our democratic institutions have been able to contain such conflicts and provide the means for their resolution through the political process.

India is also an economic success story which is not perhaps generally realised. In the forty years of planned development, India has been able to develop its agriculture to the extent that it is not only self-sufficient in food for its fast growing population, but has a modest surplus in most years. When you consider that

India has a population of 840 million people, that is no mean achievement, although highbrow economists may not acknowledge it and in any event, success does not attract as much attention as failure.

Planned development has also brought into existence a highly diversified industrial sector. The country now has an impressive corps of highly skilled and experienced scientific and technical manpower, some of whom are doing a fine job for many of the companies represented here. Today the Indian economy has attained a degree of maturity and sophistication, which naturally makes it ever willing and even eager to accept the challenge of the international market place.

The economic reform process in India must be seen against this background. The economic liberalization process is the logical continuation of the strategy of development adopted by India. It is a process necessary to take India to a new and higher level of growth. The decisions we took were well-considered. The process will continue and is irreversible precisely because of the background I have explained. It is an evolution. The people of India have accepted these changes as necessary and the results of the Parliamentary by-elections in November last year, removed all doubts on that score.

An India which is a successful democracy as well as a truly dynamic and outward looking economy can play a significant role in this new and changing world order. With its vast and growing market India can become a powerful engine for the growth of the Asian as well as the global economy. This is of great significance at a time when growth in several developed economies appears to be decelerating and access to their markets is becoming more difficult. An economically dynamic and politically stable India, by itself, is an important message to the contemporary world.

I foresee challenges ahead for India and there are many. I have deep faith in the wisdom of our people and their passionate attachment to the unity of India as well as to democracy. The Indian polity does face challenges from terrorism, religious fundamentalism and separatist tendencies. However, these challenges have not overwhelmed the country and our political institutions have demonstrated sufficient flexibility and capacity for innovation to meet these challenges.

The economic reform programme will continue and in fact should accelerate. In the short run, of course, there will be constraints on account of an inadequate infrastructure, the continuing high rate of growth of population and slow progress in eradication of poverty, illiteracy and disease.

The Government will undoubtedly shift its focus from direct economic activity to removing these major constraints on our growth. We are confident of success because India is politically stable, has rich resources and managerial and entrepreneurial skills comparable to the best in the world. I believe that your partnership with India in its march towards development would be mutually rewarding.

Need for Global Approach in Tackling Hunger and Mal-nutrition

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to inaugurate the twenty-first Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific. I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all of you. I hope during your stay you will also be able to see a little bit of our country and its agricultural development.

The countries of the Asia and the Pacific Region share many common bonds and have similar aspirations to improve the welfare of their people, and to enhance the quality of life. For most of us a strong agricultural base is vital to meeting these challenges. Experience in many parts of the world has shown that regional and international co-operation has a very important role to play in this regard.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations symbolises the spirit of international co-operation and humanity's common desire to once and for all time, rid the world of hunger and famine. It has for over 40 years played a vital role in helping the developing countries to improve their agricultural policies and planning. FAO Regional Conference provide the Member-States an excellent opportunity to deliberate problems of world agriculture and of rural communities, and to devise appropriate strategies. I am therefore very happy that this Session of Regional Conference is being held in India, at a time when we, nationally, are engaged

in reorienting agricultural policies to meet the challenges of the 1990s and beyond.

The application of the fruits of research in agricultural sciences and technology in India, from the mid 60s, enabled us to improve productivity of several crops very significantly. Despite having reached a plateau in terms of net sown area it was possible to sustain the growth rate in production due to enhancement of productivity. In the 80s with the country having reached a measure of stability in the vital foodgrains production sector, increasing attention focussed on improving productivity in areas where the growth rate was relatively slow compared to the well-endowed areas. Here too, a measure of success has been achieved, though we have still a long way to go. Our challenge now is on improving agricultural production through adoption of farming systems approach in difficult areas such as the rain-fed tracts, and the hilly regions. We also have to devote greater attention to productivity increases in non-cereal areas like oilseeds, cotton and horticultural produce.

Future increases in foodgrains production will have to come from better and more effective utilisation of infrastructure already created, as well as from rain-fed areas, and those without assured irrigation, which constitute 70 per cent of our cultivated areas. Prevention of soil erosion and moisture conservation on watershed basis and optimum use of available resources and technologies therefore become extremely important. The gains, however, are likely to be manifold, without requiring the same order of capital investment.

Agriculture has been at the forefront of national planning and economic development in India. Agriculture planning in the future will in addition to raising production, increasingly need to focus on enhancing the farmers' well-being in a more holistic sense. This includes provision of non-farm needs as well as a remunerative income commensurate with their investments and risk.

Like most other countries in our region, India is reaching limits of horizontal expansion in agricultural development. With the increasing demands being made on the land and water resources and technological changes, the need to harmonise agricultural development and environmental sustainability is becoming increasingly important. The challenge before the society is to promote a model of agricultural development designed to ensure sustainability and ecological regeneration in the degraded areas. These patterns cannot be imposed from above and have to gradually evolve and be consciously nurtured. In addressing such issues, there is also need for greater equity and accommodation at

the international level. The structures of global production and trade must be conducive to more rational and equitable management of the earth's resources. We need to evolve a global consensus and common understanding. In this context, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) being held in Rio in June 1992, can play a very important role.

Closely linked to the issue of sustainable agricultural development is the question relating to plant genetic resources. With rapid developments in bio-technology, the question of conservation of our genetic endowment and access of the farmers to these resources has required critical importance. A network of modern Gene Banks needs to be established to conserve these most valuable resources. Effective action under the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources, and any other international instruments to be evolved, should ensure germplasm conservation and equitable utilisation of this vital resource.

In order to benefit from advances made in frontier technologies in the field of agriculture, developing countries must also establish their own research facilities in basic as well as applied sciences particularly in areas of genetic engineering, tissue-culture, embryo transfer, biological control of pests and diseases, bio-fertilizers etc. Developed countries and international organisations like Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and FAO need to come forward with resources and long-term scientific and technical support to such research facilities in the developing countries so that farmers in the developing world are able to fully benefit from the forthcoming 'Gene Revolution.' Hunger has been recognised by the international community as a global challenge and needs to be met through global co-operation.

Modern economic development also entails relieving pressure from land and agriculture. Over the past few decades, with the limited land resources, the rapid growth in rural labour force and the relatively slow growth of rural off-farm sector the problems of small land holder farmers as also the landless labourers have become particularly serious. It needs to be realised that a lasting solution to rural poverty in the developing countries cannot be found only within the farm sector. Effective policies are also required to promote non-farm activities. Although agricultural growth is essential for the food security in the developing countries, the problems of rural unemployment and under-employment as also of low incomes of small farmers need to be solved by simultaneously developing the non-farm sector in the rural areas.

I am happy after reading the agenda of your Conference that this subject is being discussed—probably tomorrow or the day after—and I hope that something viable, something effective, will emerge. We find that this is one of the most important problems; Plan after Plan we have been thinking about this, we have been doing something about it. But I am sure that an expert body like this, meeting and discussing this matter, which I am sure is common to all the Asian countries, East-Asian countries and the Pacific countries, will bring about some results which are really going to be helpful to the farmers and generally to the population of these countries.

Agricultural diversification as also agro-processing supported by appropriate pricing policies and market infrastructure, besides increasing land and labour productivity, would also lead to higher farmer incomes which would generate better standards of living for the people in the rural areas. It would also generate the much needed investments for the agricultural sector. Such diversification would also usher in a shift towards production of commodities such as animal and marine products, fruits, vegetables and flowers which have bigger demands in high income countries. Increasing share of the agricultural commodities marketed and consumed in processed form will also result in expansion of employment and enhancement of incomes and greater household food security in the rural areas.

Ensuring household food security and nutrition also require long-term interventions aimed at promoting overall economic and social growth. The world today has over 500 million people throughout the developing countries who are not consuming enough food to lead active and healthy lives and are living in unsanitary environment with inadequate access to clean water and social services. The national development plans would therefore need to be supplemented by adequate social safety nets and income transfer measures which ensure priority targetting of benefits to the malnourished and food insecure households. This must be an integral part of our efforts to implement the overall two-pronged approach to food security, namely, increasing food production and improved access to food. In this context, I commend the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the World Health Organisation for convening the International Conference on Nutrition in Rome in December 1992, and I am sure it will make an important contribution in these areas.

This again is a felt need of the developing countries. We have seen that on an average or on an aggregate what we produce is a large quantity by any standards but the levels of nutrition, levels

of consumption happen to be quite low. And if we take what is the desirable consumption level for any individual in these countries, perhaps we have to come to the conclusion that the Green Revolution that we have been proud of, and justifiably proud of, will still fall short of what is needed for the whole country. So, it is not only a question of increasing production but also some arrangement by which internally the country is able to look after itself both in the production of food and also in providing sufficient nutrition to all its inhabitants. This is a complicated matter. The planning will have to vary from country to country but since this Conference is concerned with a particular region, I have reason to believe that conditions are generally similar—not necessarily identical but generally similar—in all the overpopulated countries of Asia and probably you will find that it is possible to some extent to come up with common prescriptions and common remedies.

A number of developing countries undergoing economic reforms and restructuring are experiencing difficulties aggravated by heavy indebtedness, mounting inflation, deteriorating terms of trade, low agricultural growth rates and adverse demographic trends. The need for direct intervention measures by way of providing increased food aid from external sources, strengthening of national public distribution system, increased income transfers and social investments acquires greater relevance and importance for these countries to alleviate short-term problems associated with such adjustments. We are going through this phase right now in India and I must admit that we are coming up against a bewildering variety of problems from day to day. I am sure we will be able to get over them but the fact remains that the problems are really complicated and it needs a lot of hard work and micro-planning going right down to the village level, right down to the family level, right down to the individual level, in order to solve most of these problems. To reduce the economic and social costs the adjustment process should be fully supported by the international community.

I am not sure to what extent we will succeed. But if this Conference with its influence can clearly state what the problems of these countries are and how different they are from the problems of agriculture itself in the Western countries, countries advanced in agriculture, it will be a great service to the people of these countries because the distinctive nature of these problems and the complicated nature of the question coming up here has to be taken note of and I hope at this Conference at least some effort will be made to take note of this because I don't see any other way of

solving these problems except by invoking the international community to do whatever is necessary in order to alleviate the sufferings of the people here and also to fill the gap which is sure to be created as a result of the restructuring programme that we have undertaken in this country and perhaps the similar programmes undertaken in other countries of the Region.

Structural adjustment is a dynamic process which aims at establishing conditions for a viable growth process within the economy and in the relationship between the domestic and international economy. The policies followed by some developed countries especially in the field of trade in agriculture and commodities, undermines the potential for agricultural development in the developing countries. Many Asian developing countries are restricted from deriving the full benefit from global economic opportunities on account of trade barriers in developed countries and the massive amounts spent in protecting their agriculture. It is hoped that the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade negotiations would address these issues in a balanced manner, taking into account the development dimension of agriculture in the developing countries.

The need for strengthening South-South Co-operation in seeking solutions to our common problems needs to be pursued with greater vigour. I feel economic and technical co-operations among developing countries (ECDC and TCDC) is an ideal vehicle for mutual help and transfer of technology. For example, Asian countries account for more than 90 per cent of the World's paddy production. There are striking differences with reference to production and productivity of rice in various countries of the region who can work together to improve productivity in all the countries.

The agricultural sector is particularly suited for learning from each other and helping each other in increasing productivity and production of various crops. The success of the TCDC Programming Exercise in Agriculture Sector held in New Delhi in October 1991 is a pointer to the potential that exists for collaborative action for fostering mutual technical co-operation and building up of confidence in each other's technical capabilities and enhancing the quality of international co-operation. Another convenient feature of this exercise is that conditions are similar, the climatic and other conditions are similar in these countries, and perhaps the problems of agriculture, when you go deep into the details, would be found more or less similar and, therefore, it is possible again in this field to do something which is common to all the countries.

Your participation in the deliberations of the Conference during this week would enrich the FAO's ability to deal with intractable problems of hunger, mal-nutrition and environmental degradation. All the three are inter-related and all the three would have to be addressed. No sectoral approach will do. Hunger, mal-nutrition and environmental degradation—this is the triangle you will have to tackle and I am sure you will be able to find ways of tackling it successfully and effectively. I wish the Conference all success.

India and Namibia

HISTORY BECKONS ONLY to a few of its favoured sons whose destiny it is to rise against the forces of oppression and to successfully lead their people to freedom and a new life. We are honoured to have one such in our midst today, President Sam Nujoma of Namibia.

We have had the privilege of welcoming you, Mr. President, to India on many earlier occasions. We count on you as an old and trusted friend but what an added pleasure it is to have you with us as the leader of a sovereign nation, a symbol of free Namibia. The road to freedom is never easy, much more so if the oppressor is intransigent and commands vastly superior forces and resources. Mahatma Gandhiji taught us that eventually one moral force of the freedom fighter must inevitably overcome the brute strength of the oppressor. We have been through a similar struggle and know what boundless sacrifice, pain, indomitable courage and force of conviction are called for on the part of the countless comrades involved in the struggle. We are aware also of the tremendous leadership qualities which persons who spear-head struggle must possess, the qualities that count no sacrifice too great, no pain too severe, no setback too disheartening in their march towards liberty. It is these qualities that mark the men of destiny and it is these qualities that set you apart Mr. President as the leader of the Namibian people's long and difficult struggle. In you they found renewed hope and renewed courage and under your inspiration and

SWAPO's guidance they first shook off the shackles of despair and finally the shackles of colonial domination.

Thirty years in exile can be an unbearably long time. Thirty years of ceaseless endeavour against overwhelming odds, barred from setting foot in one's motherland cut off from the wellsprings of one's existence, that has been your lot. But you, your comrades in exile and the whole people of Namibia were not cowed down or browbeaten. The Independence of Namibia is your crowing glory and now you have been summoned to even a greater task to lead your nation on the path of reconciliation and reconstruction.

All through the decades of struggle, India was proud to have been in the forefront of those supporting SWAPO and through it the people of Namibia. Indeed, the legacy of our freedom movement would expect us to do no less. The leaders of our national movement inspired by the vision of Jawaharlal Nehru would always regard our own freedom as incomplete if other countries remained in subjugation. Support for the liberation movements was, therefore, an article of faith for us but the movement for the independence of Namibia and against apartheid in South Africa had an added emotional underpinning to the national consensus on these matters. This was the affront to human dignity imposed by the racial discrimination practiced in South Africa and Namibia.

Your presence here today brings back poignant memories of Indira Gandhi in whose name this Award is instituted. Indira Gandhi was first and foremost a champion of the oppressed. She was also a leader who saw clearly that liberty is the prerequisite for peace in the world. A gallant and tireless battle for the independence of Namibia and the struggle against apartheid is well-known. She provided moral, political and material support to the liberation movements in Namibia and South Africa to the limits of India's ability. She consistently raised her voice on these issues throughout the world community.

With Rajiv Gandhi, India's support and solidarity with the struggle continued unabated. In addition to whatever India could do nationally he sought to galvanise practical support from the Non-Aligned Movement and the wider international community through the launching of the AFRICA Fund, one of the most successful examples of functioning solidarity among the Non-Aligned and developing countries. I know how proud and happy Rajivji would have been to see you receive this Award today as a token of our affection and esteem.

Today Namibia has been free for almost two years. We have watched with admiration the wisdom that has characterised the Namibian Government's approach under your guidance. Namibia

today is firmly embarked on the path of national reconstruction. You are working to remove the deep divisions, suspicions and bitterness that had been generated through decades of apartheid and colonialism. The magnanimity and far-sightedness you have shown augur a great future for the people of Namibia.

I wish to assure you, Mr. President, that we are as firmly committed now in our support for the task of nation-building in independent Namibia as we were during the days of the struggle. You have a formidable task ahead of you since our independence, India too has learnt a good deal and gathered a degree of experience and knowledge particularly relevant for developing countries. We are still learning but what we have learnt is available for Namibia to draw upon now and forever in the future.

Renewing Bonds

I COME TO Mauritius as an old friend and admirer. May I thank you, Right Honourable Prime Minister, for your kind invitation and for the warm and friendly reception you have accorded me. Mauritius is on the threshold of a historic day when it will declare itself a Republic. That is the logical culmination of the process of Independence, which was simultaneously launched, in our countries by the great visionaries of our national movements. I bring the fraternal greetings and the warm good wishes of the Government and the people of India to the new Republic. May the Mauritian Republic shine forth ever brighter as the Star of the Indian Ocean.

There are very few countries in the world separated by a vast ocean as India and Mauritius are, which nevertheless have so much in common—ties of blood and kinship, a shared heritage of culture, religion and language, and a tradition of close interaction during our independence struggle. These are our enduring assets, the solid foundation of our abiding friendship. Our joint endeavour has been to build on this foundation, an edifice of multi-faceted co-operation. In a world that is witness to radical transformation, our shared values serve as constants. These include our common cultural springs, our democratic systems of governance and co-operation for international peace and prosperity. I particularly look forward

to our exchange of views on international affairs and on developmental and environmental issues.

May I once again express my deep gratitude for the warmth and generosity of your welcome, and reiterate how much I look forward to this visit to renew our bonds.

India and Mauritius

IT IS A matter of great honour and privilege for me and my delegation to join the people of Mauritius in celebrating this momentous occasion in the life of their nation. On behalf of the Government and the people of India and on my own behalf, I wish to convey warm congratulations and greetings to the President of the Republic, to the Right Honourable Prime Minister and his Government, and to the friendly people of Mauritius. May Mauritius continue to forge ahead, in its quest for peace and prosperity for its people. I would also like to express our deep gratitude for the generous and spontaneous hospitality accorded to each one of us by the Government and the people of Mauritius.

I have returned to your beautiful Island after almost five years. The rapid all around progress Mauritius has made is all visible everywhere. An efficient sugar industry, for long the dominant economic asset, has been joined by the dynamic export processing zone and the tourism industry, to constitute a veritable troika of growth. The resulting “economic miracle” has been matched by outstanding social progress, reflected by the indicators of low infant mortality, high life expectancy and near-universal literacy.

Much credit for all this goes to Prime Minister Jugnauth who has inspired and guided the talent of Mauritius people for the past several years. It gives me great pleasure to congratulate him, a few months ahead of the date, on the approaching tenth anniversary of his primeministership, and to wish him many more years of leadership and service to the nation.

Mauritius is a vibrant democracy. We applaud this because it conforms to our own ideals. In both our countries, the principles of self-governance, rule of law, fundamental freedoms and human

rights, are enshrined in our constitutions. These principles are also practised daily in our legislative, executive and judicial organs and all our institutions under the watchful eye of a free press and an alert public opinion. Both our countries find in democracy a system which gives the fullest expression to our multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multi-religious personalities. We exemplify unity in diversity.

The special Indo-Mauritian relationship is founded on our shared ethnicity, and our linkages of culture, religion and language. Recent years have seen a rich flowering of our bilateral exchanges. Frequent high-level consultations and dialogue have become a tradition.

Right Honourable Prime Minister, we recall with warmth your short official visit to Delhi in July last year, and your participation in our Republic Day celebrations in 1990 as our honoured Chief Guest.

In spheres of trade, investments, and technology Mauritius is an increasingly important partner for India in the Indian Ocean region. In the area of education and manpower development, we offer privileged access to Mauritius for university-level scholarships and mid-career training fellowships. In sectors such as sports, culture, scientific research and medicine we have established active co-operation. Our Joint Commission, at ministerial level, serves as the fulcrum for developmental co-operation. These programmes, and many more, receive the full support of our people and our institutions, and I would like to reaffirm our commitment to maintain and strengthen them. Today, the twelfth of March is a date of special significance in the history of our freedom movement also. It commemorates the anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's Salt March at Dandi, which launched the Satyagraha Movement and marked a decisive turning point in bringing colonialism to an end. The Father of Mauritian nation Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam chose the twelfth March as your Independence Day as a special tribute to Mahatma Gandhi. As an Indian, I am moved and honoured by this gesture and it leaves a deep imprint on our psyche as a nation.

We are witness to extraordinary transformation in the world. Its range and velocity confirms the adage: "Change is the only Constant." Today the winds of democracy blow stronger everywhere. We welcome this, but as developing countries confronting a gamut of socio-economic challenges, we affirm that equitable development is the pre-condition to sustaining democracy. The international economic environment remains unfavourable. An under-privileged South, limited in its access to resources and technology, coexists with an affluent, but increasingly preoccupied

North. Thus it is imperative that developing countries help each other in the promotion of their economic interests and seek complementarity with developed countries on terms of human dignity and equality. In this fast shrinking world prosperity is as indivisible as peace and freedom.

We live in an increasingly interdependent world. Regional co-operation is a high priority in our age. In South Asia, we have made some progress with SAARC, but have yet to move ahead on the central issue of economic co-operation. Mauritius has been an active member of the Indian Ocean Commission. We have offered to co-operate with the Commission, and look forward to its concretisation.

The Non-Aligned Movement was a continuation of the struggle of newly emergent nations for independence. It remains valid as long as it brings together nations sharing common perspectives and a common interest on issues of peace and security, disarmament, economic development and global environment. In this, as on many other issues, India and Mauritius are together.

I take this opportunity to reaffirm our support for the sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago.

We have followed closely the positive developments that have taken place in South Africa, and have supported the calibrated response of the Commonwealth, in terms of lifting restrictions on people-to-people exchanges. Apartheid is now on its legs. It must go, finally and forever.

Mr. Prime Minister, Friends, if I am permitted a little reminiscence, today, twelfth March has a personal significance for me. It was thirty years ago today that I joined the Council of Ministers in my home state, Andhra Pradesh. This was my induction into the duties of Government. Looking back today, the vast and undulating stretch of success and failure, acclaim and attack, flits across my mind's eye, leaving a sense of humility and, on the whole, fulfilment. The years have enhanced the aspirations and yearnings of our people and placed upon those whom they elevate to governmental power an awesome mandate and responsibility, which only co-operation, communion and consensus among nations, and within nations, can help fulfil.

May I reiterate once again how profoundly happy I feel in sharing your joy and pride on this festive occasion, the twenty-fourth anniversary of your Independence when you also celebrate the Birth of your Republic. May success greet you at every step.

Towards Mutual Co-operation

AT THE OUTSET, I wish to convey my congratulations and greetings on today's historic event, the proclamation of the Republic of Mauritius. I bring to you the warm and sincere good wishes of the people of India on this occasion. May Mauritius be a land of peace and prosperity forever.

I have been deeply touched by the affection demonstrated by the socio-cultural organisations present at this civic reception representing such a wide spectrum of the Mauritian community. I cherish this as a manifestation of your friendship and goodwill for a land from which the majority of your ancestors came. I reciprocate your sentiments most warmly.

History tells us that the first migrants from India came to this beautiful Island in the eighteenth century during the period of French rule. A little later, after Mauritius has passed under British rule, thousands of indentured workers were brought from India, to work on sugar plantations, under conditions of extreme hardship and suffering. This practice continued for the next seven decades.

This morning I had the privilege of laying the foundation-stone of the Aapravasi Ghat National Monument, which commemorates the actual landing site of nearly half a million Indian migrants. It was a moving experience to go up the steps of what used to be called "Coolie Ghat," where the migrants set foot on land, after their perilous voyage by sea. We can well imagine the sacrifice they underwent and feel in our own heart the agony and pain of separation, physical hardship and torment they bore with patience and fortitude.

What was it that sustained them in their dark period? They came from the interior areas of Bihar and U.P, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra from many different parts of India. They spoke different languages, but were rooted in one unified culture. Among their meagre possessions were the sacred Ramayana and the Bhagavad Gita, and the Holy Koran. This faith, and their deep-rooted values, sustained them in the years of struggle. They created the wealth of Mauritius with the sweat of their brow. Your current edifice of growth and prosperity rests on the foundations of their labour and toil.

After Independence, Mauritius has done much for the preservation of this rich Indian heritage. Today, it forms part of the beautiful

Mauritian bouquet with other colourful flowers from Africa, Europe and China. I pay special tribute to the Mauritius government for all it has done to preserve this "unity in diversity". The Mahatma Gandhi Institute and many socio-cultural organisations and volunteer bodies have made their own contribution in this veritable process of national integration.

There are many dimensions to the co-operation between India and Mauritius today. Our common heritage and our shared ideals have inspired our co-operation. Our two governments have worked in many ways to strengthen these bonds. We have an active programme of cultural exchanges. I am glad to note that the Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture is functioning actively. Although there has been some delay, work on the detailed architectural design of a new building for the Centre has been completed, and construction should commence by the end of this year.

Both India and Mauritius have seen rapid economic progress in the past decade. This presents new challenge for co-operation. The India-Mauritius Joint Commission has been working regularly since 1978 and has implemented a number of beneficial projects, including the Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital, the Upadhyaya Industrial Training Centre and the Court House under construction in Port Louis. An important new project is the proposed Computer Software Training Centre. At the August 1991 session of this Joint Commission, we mutually agreed to adapt our co-operation to the new requirements of Mauritius. We also agreed to give attention to closer business exchanges.

I am glad that there is increasing interaction between the businessmen and industrialists of our two countries today. An Indian business delegation has been in Mauritius this week to join in the Republic Day festivities. I have also learnt with pleasure that the Mauritius Export Development and Investment Authority have opened an office in India last month. Two hundred million rupees have been set apart for developing fund for promoting joint ventures. However, much more needs to be done for greater economic co-operation between the two countries. I would like to reaffirm my commitment to continue and broaden our co-operation in every manner possible.

This is my fourth visit to Mauritius and I have seen for myself the remarkable advances which have been achieved, particularly in the past decade under the leadership of Prime Minister Anerood Jugnauth. Economic prosperity has been matched by advancing social, health and educational standards. The example of Mauritius is an inspiration for other countries in this region.

Around the world today there is an upsurge of freedom and democracy. These principles have been the very foundation of the political systems of our two countries. They are part of our culture and have brought stability and unity among our people.

As developing and non-aligned nations, our countries are partners, in the search for a new international order based on equity and justice. I have had the opportunity of discussing with Prime Minister Jugnauth and his colleagues, regional and global issues in a world of momentous changes. Our dialogue has been very fruitful and we look forward to a further intensification of our relations and contacts in every field.

India and Bangladesh

IT GIVES ME immense pleasure to extend you a warm and friendly welcome, Madam Prime Minister, on behalf of the Government and people of India and on my own behalf. Your visit to our country is of historic importance because we receive you today as the leader of a democratic Bangladesh. Our two countries are closely linked together by myriad ties of shared history and cultural affinity. Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam provide us inspiration; the melodies of Fakir Lalan Shah move us equally; the folk songs of Jasimuddin evoke in us nostalgia for the rural simplicity of Bengal.

Rarely in history has a nation paid so heavily in blood and tears as you did in attaining your cherished goal of Independence. We in India were truly moved to witness the outpouring of warm appreciation and vivid memories of our own association with your struggle for freedom when you recently celebrated the twentieth anniversary of Victory Day.

Excellency, we meet at a time when the nature and contours of international relations have been undergoing a rapid change. These changes do not, in our considered opinion, question the fundamental relevance of our approach to the world, of the basic principles and values which have served as the basis of our foreign policy. My

Government continues to accord priority to the improvement and consolidation of relations with our neighbours. In this context, we recall with deep appreciation the pioneering role played by your late husband, President Ziaur Rahman in promoting the idea of regional co-operation which has already emerged as a concrete reality in the shape of SAARC today. It has become a powerful medium for promoting understanding, co-operation and friendship amongst South Asian countries.

We are all conscious of the fact that though it has not yet fully developed, SAARC possesses immense potential for future growth and expansion as democratic Governments consciously work to promote the welfare of their peoples, and secure a more purposeful and effective harmonisation of their common interests. SAARC will complete its first cycle of summits this year and we shall once again return to your beautiful capital city of Dhaka for the Seventh Summit.

Like all neighbouring countries with a legacy of close social, political and cultural interaction, besides extensive borders, Bangladesh and India inevitably face certain bilateral problems, many of which have been inherited from a common colonial past. We should take a clear and dispassionate look at these issues and try to resolve them to our mutual satisfaction. Both our countries are committed to the Parliamentary form of Government and have to act keeping our accountability to Parliament and the people in view. Indeed, we have to carry them with us in our quest for acceptable solutions. Given political will and a clear understanding of each other's perceptions and sensitivities we shall certainly succeed in devising a common approach to overcome such difficulties as there may be.

I would like to assure you, Excellency, that we are keen to work out an equitable, long-term and comprehensive sharing of major common rivers in a manner whereby the optimum development of available water resources for our two countries is assured. We must diversify our relations in the fields of trade and economy as well as industrial, technological and agricultural co-operation. We are ready to suggest and to respond constructively to specific proposals to attain the objective of a significantly increased level of bilateral co-operation.

For this co-operative endeavour to succeed, however, there must, first and foremost, be an atmosphere of cordiality, trust and understanding between us. Once such an atmosphere is created, the resolution of most, if not all, our bilateral problems should become easier. We hope and trust that this approach of ours will be reciprocated in full measure.

I would like to conclude by extending our best wishes to you, Excellency, for a very successful visit to our country. I hope that you will return with pleasant memories of your stay with us.

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to be associated with this international seminar to commemorate the birth centenary of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. A distinguished leader of South Asia, his contribution to our struggle for freedom and to the establishment of democratic norms in South Asia is a matter of universal acclaim.

I extend a very warm and affectionate welcome to Wali Khan Saheb. His presence in our midst is always welcome but more so on this occasion. When in a few words, it has given more or less the setting which is so important for a seminar like this. His presence brings to bear on our deliberations, in manner that cannot be excelled, those sacrosanct values which inspired Badshah Khan and for which values he waged a life-long relentless struggle.

I am happy to observe that we have with us on this occasion persons prominent in public life and in scholarship from our neighbouring countries, as well as distinguished scholars and intellectuals from India.

I have often reflected upon the very special place which men of towering moral stature like Mahatma Gandhi and Badshah Khan have held in the civilization of South Asia. Their life and work prove the point that for public service to endure, it must be informed by an unequivocal adherence to moral values, that moral principles constitute perhaps the greatest cementing force and the most effective motivating force for concerted and sustained action. It has indeed been a uniquely effective praxis which moral action has engendered in politics. I am confident that the reasons behind this remarkable phenomenon will feature again and again in the deliberations of this seminar, which it is my privilege to inaugurate.

Badshah Khan belongs to that tradition of outstanding personalities whose actions drew strength from convictions rooted

firmly in morality and who dedicated themselves to the welfare of the people. Perhaps such a critique of his personality can help us understand the quality of his charisma, no less than it can help us understand the heroic role which he played in the struggle for freedom, and in the reinforcement of democratic values after 1947.

If the physical environment of the Frontier Province in which Badshah Khan grew up was somewhat forbidding, then quite the reverse was true of the domestic environment in which he grew up to maturity. His father, Khan Behram Khan, a man of distinguished lineage, was God-fearing and compassionate in the extreme. Behram Khan's compassion was reflected in his affection for his kinsfolk; as it was also reflected in the sustenance he extended to the less fortunate members of his village, and his tribe. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that as Badshah Khan grew to adult life, he pondered deeply over the problems confronting the Pakhtuns, and other regional communities who were under the British yoke. His study of history reinforced the influence exerted by his family environment. A serious student of history, he acquainted himself fully with the past of his country. The north-western borderlands of India had in remote antiquity witnessed the migration of the Aryan peoples from the highlands of Central Asia, and beyond, to the fertile riverine plains of the Indus and the Ganga. No less significant than the Aryan migration, in shaping the culture of the Pakhtun community, was the flowering of the Buddhism in their homeland. The next decisive event in Pakhtun history was the movement of Islam to the north-west of India. Both the pre-Islamic past, and the profound impact of Islam, were decisive influences on the Pakhtuns and shaped their lifestyle as well as their understanding of the sacred and the profane, the secular and the spiritual and the distinction which one needs to draw and understand because one very often runs into the other unless we understand both properly and accurately.

How Badshah Khan's Pakhtun heritage enabled him to reach out to non-violence, is a seminal field of enquiry for scholars who seek to assess his life and achievements. The Buddhist past was an obvious influence here. But other factors were equally active. That the ethos of Islam is shaped by a powerful commitment to non-violence, as the noblest and most effective form of social action, is widely acknowledged by all those who have explored the relevant sacred texts. Among others the name of another very distinguished citizen of South Asia, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, comes to mind in this context. I understand that the Seminar will, among other themes, dwell upon the theme "Non-violence and Islam."

For Badshah Khan, there were, perhaps, two additional reasons which convinced him that salvation for the Pakhtuns lay in adopting the path of peace. The feuding which characterised Pakhtun society was a source of deep anguish to him, since the creative energies of his people were frittered away in such conflict. It was, indeed clear to Badshah Khan that unless the Pakhtuns were able to put an end to the notice which affected their day-to-day lives, they would make little progress. It was also clear to him that the British could not be dislodged through an armed struggle. The Pakhtuns, who were of war like disposition, had repeatedly attempted to overthrow the British Government through recourse to arms. Yet these uprisings were suppressed with a brutal hand, causing immense sufferance to the Pakhtuns. Badshah Khan was convinced that their cultural and religious heritage, no less than the harsh realities of political power, necessitated the observance of strict non-violence by the Pakhtuns in their struggle for freedom.

The strategy of non-violence adopted by Badshah Khan, for the realization of nationalist aspirations, as well as for the internal transformation of Pakhtun society, largely shaped his political action and his initiatives in social reform. In the first instance, as an enthusiastic convert to the Pan-Islamic Movement, he sought to create a new consciousness among the Pakhtuns through opening a number of schools for the youth of the community. Simultaneously, he launched the first Pushto language journal called the *Pakhtun*, as a vehicle for bringing about a cultural and intellectual renaissance in the community. The success of these two ventures led to the creation of a cadre of volunteers called the *Khudai Khidmatgars*, or the Servants of God, who were dedicated to the service of the country along non-violent lines. This grew into a very substantial movement, which gradually undermined the authority of the British in the Frontier Province, and replaced it by the moral authority of Badshah Khan and his followers.

Badshah Khan's genius was sensitively reflected in the manner in which he organised the movement for civil disobedience in the Frontier Province. His followers not only extended strong support to the Movement, but they did so in so trenchantly non-violent a fashion, the Frontier Province could very legitimately be regarded as a stronghold of Satyagraha in undivided India. It could perhaps be an example of this trend even today but then the atmosphere for that is not there right now. Perhaps, the determined manner in which the Pakhtuns pursued a principle, once they accepted its validity, may have had something to do with this. I think in our young days we had occasion to read many articles, many descriptions of Badshah Khan. We were all fired with imagination, admiration when we were told that once they take a decision nothing

on earth can make them waiver in that decision. In literature we have lots of stories, lots of characters created by great writers, the Pathan character, intrepid, absolutely honest, unmoving and yet full of compassion, compassion coupled with unparalleled bravery. I think this combination is something which is rare. One of the themes of the seminar I notice is "Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Pakhtun Society and Khudai Khidmatgars". So, you will have occasion to go into all these details. The deliberations on this theme will, I am sure, provide interesting insights into how the Khudai Khidmatgars organisation drew sustenance from Pakhtun society and in turn influenced it. Those who had attended Congress Sessions in those days still remember the groups of Khudai Khidmatgars and advice that intrepid character which struck to a principle, come what may.

Badshah Khan's unequivocal commitment to non-violence and to the cause of Pan-Indian nationalism, could not, unfortunately, stem the developments in those fateful years, the 1940s, developments which through a convoluted and bloody process led to the partition of the country. The steps which led to the partition and the partition itself were developments, which left an indelible mark upon the subsequent history of South Asia. I note with interest that several presentations shall be made on matters concerning these developments in the course of the seminar.

The partition of British India, and the referendum which determined the fate of the Frontier Province, were bitter blows for Badshah Khan. For a fervent nationalist, wedded to the principle of non-violence, and to the unity of India, the partition of British India constituted a shattering rejection of his life's work. Yet the decades after 1947 can be regarded as an era which brought out the nobles in him. He was also steadfast in supporting democratic issues just as he was also steadfast in holding firm to the principle of non-violence which he had adopted at the commencement of his career. While many freedom fighters in India and in Pakistan were drawn into the work of governance, Badshah Khan spent many lonesome years in prison, suffering for the cause that was so dear to him.

We, who find ourselves in the last decade of the twentieth century, increasingly drawn into identity crisis and religious conflicts need to study Badshah Khan's personality more deeply than perhaps we have done so far, I believe that an exploration of the life and thought of Badshah Khan is likely to give us insights which may be of help. If so, then our tribute to the sacred memory of Badshah Khan will also be productive of a praxis for our times.

Environment and Development

WE WOULD LIKE to thank you, Mr. President, for hosting our conference in this serene, and yet vivacious city, which reflects at once Nature's benediction and man's urge to enhance its splendour. We cherish the warmth of the welcome that we have received from the people and the Government of Brazil. It has made easier our long march to Rio.

We inhabit a single planet but several worlds. There is a world of abundance where plenty brings pollution. There is a world of want where deprivation degrades life. Such a fragmented planet cannot survive in harmony with nature and the environment or indeed, with itself. It can assure neither sustained peace nor sustainable development. We must, therefore, ensure that the affluence of some is not derived from the poverty of the many. As Mahatma Gandhi put it with characteristic simplicity, our world has enough for each person's need, but not for his greed.

At this Conference, we must seek and define the golden mean between drawing from nature what we need to sustain ourselves and leaving to it what it requires to sustain itself for the future. Indira Gandhi had perceived at the Stockholm Conference in 1972 that as long as several worlds share our single planet, very little can be done about sustaining life on it. Today it is clear, we cannot have conservation of the environment without the promise of development, even as we cannot have sustained development without the preservation of the environment. The recognition of this symbiosis, is the only enduring basis on which this Conference can attain its purposes.

There is, to my mind, need for a large-scale awareness programme in all countries, developed and developing. Again, this realization should come across the board, without becoming an electoral issue, over-championed by some political parties and for the same reason, cold-shouldered by others. It should become a common national and international norm. Only on this basis can a political consensus be built, in the interest of future generations.

Now, Sir, for some practical measures to tackle this common challenge, Mr. President the late Shri Rajiv Gandhi as India's young and far-sighted Prime Minister had thought of the subject of environment most earnestly and minutely. His proposal at the

Belgrade Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement for a Planet Protection Fund was designed to make all countries, save the least developed, bear an equitable financial burden for accessing environment-friendly technologies. The basic approach of this proposal is impeccable. My appeal to the world leaders is that in some form or another, we must consider it seriously.

A whole new range of such technologies will need to be developed and existing ones either effectively adapted or discarded. In this sense all countries are in relatively uncharted waters. It is not a simple question of transfer of technology as is commonly understood. Indeed, the process has to start with stopping the transfer of destructive technologies, which alone will give incentive to the development of environment-friendly technologies. Thereafter will come the stage of transferring those new technologies everywhere. For this, we will need to pool the experience and draw upon the collective and accumulated knowledge and skills of humankind as a whole.

Countries which are not at a high level of industrial development also have much to offer to this collective endeavour. Their peoples retain a close affinity and kinship with Nature and have learnt to make the best use of its resources in areas like traditional and herbal medicine, water-harvesting and management. At the very least, they have not yet become experts in creating pollution. Their life has a larger element of contentment, which prevents over-exploitation of resources. What they really need is a decent normal life.

We in India have embarked on a massive programme to develop non-conventional sources of energy, particularly solar and wind energy. The technology is known, but is said to be uneconomic at the moment. I have no doubt that an earnest R&D effort, as well as a determined bid to achieve economies of scale, will make it economically attractive and acceptable. I would appeal to all developed countries, with their vast R&D potential, to play a prominent part in this venture. They would be helping a vast number of developing countries in one of the best ways imaginable.

As part of co-operation among developing countries, the G-15 countries have adopted solar energy applications as a key project for joint Research and Development. They have also recognised the great importance of preserving bio-diversity even while developing beneficial bio-technology products. This is the basis for another G-15 project—the creation of a Gene Bank. For both these projects, India is the co-ordinator. Both these contribute to the purposes of this Conference.

I would like to pledge our readiness to share the fruits of our R&D efforts in these areas with all the countries of the world, with all those who are interested in the cause of a cleaner Earth.

The reversal of our planet's degradation would be that much easier and speedier if we were to join hands together in such endeavours. I suggest the setting up of joint ventures or joint R&D projects between developed and developing countries, to tackle environmental issues together. We need to tackle these practical questions through international co-operation. There are many successful examples of such co-operation. A world-wide effort in the seventies succeeded in eradicating smallpox. Improved varieties of seeds developed by an American scientist working on Mexican strains of wheat, triggered off our own Green Revolution in India. If this Summit succeeds in mobilising a similar world-wide effort in the cause of environment and development, success would not be beyond us.

We know that the resolution of these issues will take time. We should not expect instant results on everything at this first Conference. To my mind, therefore, this Conference marks the commencement of a process and must become part of a continuing review and action. We would be happy to work together with other nations for evolving an appropriate mechanism for this purpose. This should not become a matter of contention, but a dialogue among nations infused with the spirit of far-reaching global responsibility and commitment.

I wish to emphasize that success in what we have started today will only be possible if we avoid the temptation of treating the issues before us as subjects for political posturing and bargaining. Collective action is not possible if one group of nations claims innocence on one item while another avoids any responsibility or commitment on some other item. All the issues before us today are integral links in a single chain, a single package to save the Earth. The urgency of the task also needs to be highlighted by suggesting at least approximate time-frames. All countries must make credible commitments. India is certainly prepared to do so.

Several hundred years ago, poets in India had paid their tributes to the Earth they cherished. They sang:

“The ocean is your girdle,
Your Bosom the mountains,
Goddess Earth, My obeisance to you,
Forgive me for daring to touch you with my feet.”

That remarkable reverence for the Earth is what all of us need to imbibe here in Rio. That will impart real meaning to this Earth Summit.

India and Japan

MR. PRIME MINISTER, let me first of all thank you for the very warm words of welcome that you have addressed to me and my country this evening. On behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Government and people of Japan for the friendship and warmth with which we have been received. The cordiality and warmth that always marked interaction between the Indian and Japanese people were indeed very much in evidence during the wide-ranging and constructive discussions we held earlier today. I am reminded of the sentiments expressed by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru after his visit to Japan in October 1957 that whatever be the outward results to be obtained by such visits, the inner results of bringing our two peoples together are far more important and greater.

1992 marks the fortieth anniversary of the formal establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries. Forty years ago, India and Japan embarked on a new phase in their relationship building upon the foundations of the traditionally close and long-standing religious and cultural ties going back several centuries in history. To the enduring heritage of Buddhist values and spiritual ties, were added the links between two democracies and a new economic partnership based on mutual benefit. We are happy that several events have been planned during this year to commemorate this important anniversary and to remind us of the affinity we share as two ancient cultures and peoples of Asia. We particularly look forward to the forthcoming visit to India by Their Highness Prince and Princess Akishino later this year.

The extremely useful talks we had earlier today have convinced me that the prospects for our relationship are brighter than before. I have come to Japan two years after your then Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu visited India. Our high-level exchanges have helped us to deepen our political and economic dialogue and enhanced mutual understanding. The frequency and level of our exchanges also reflect the accelerated pace of change in the world around us. Though these changes possess varied portents, they also provide us here in Asia with a unique opportunity to add several new dimensions to our relationship. India and Japan now consult regularly on issues of mutual concern. They share the view that

Speech at the banquet hosted by the Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Miyazawa, Tokyo, 23 June 1992

we must co-operate in restructuring international relations in a manner that permits global and regional issues to be tackled both effectively as well as in a more democratic international environment.

The great achievements of the Japanese people, the Japanese way of life marked by simplicity, extreme courtesy, and an eye for beauty and the rhythm of poetry evoke admiration amongst the people of India. What is most striking about Japan is its achievement of the highest degree of technological advancement without sacrificing its cultural identity and age-old values. We, as an ancient culture, strive for the same harmony and balance while pursuing the goal of modernisation.

Over the past year, my Government has launched a policy of thorough-going economic reform and liberalisation. These policies have already begun to show results. We are convinced that it is only through the application of the products of science and technology, whether in the management of the economy, or in agriculture and industry, that we can succeed in raising the standard of living of our people. In this we can study a lot in what Japan has done to make the most of her resources and to develop a manner which ensures prosperity, coupled with social harmony.

Japan enjoys great respect in India. Much of this respect is due to Japan's technological excellence and the spirit of service which accounts for the success of its marketing. Japan also has an excellent track record of assisting developing countries. We are equally grateful to Japan for the consistent support it has provided to our economic development, in particular the timely help it extended when we faced a critical economic situation. I would like to record our appreciation for the assurance given to me that Japan will continue to be a reliable partner in our endeavour to achieve economic success.

When I speak of new opportunities in our relationship, I also have in mind the political values we share, whether from the fact that we are nations belonging to Asia or from our collective espousal of the cause of peace. We are both functioning and vibrant democracies, with a social matrix that places emphasis on the great civilisational values of harmony and consensus rather than confrontation. In India, consensus is a long standing tradition and it finds constant expression in many aspects of our lives. It should be possible for us both to work for the renaissance of these values in a changing world. The current trend towards assertion of separate identities, ethnic, cultural or religious, needs to be counter-balanced with values of co-existence, tolerance and harmony. These values

are deep-rooted in our cultures and in the attitudes of our peoples. This is the basis of my conviction that India and Japan can fashion a truly rewarding partnership not only to their own mutual benefit but for the benefit of Asia and the world.

Economic Partnership between India and Japan

I AM CONSCIOUS that I am here in the midst of the real architects of Japan's economic miracle, the patriots and visionaries, who built a new Japan from the ashes of the Second World War. At the end of the War, Japanese GNP was about 1 per cent of world GNP. In 1960, it became 3 per cent and today it is 15 per cent and growing. That is the measure of your success. Behind it lies the dedication, enterprise and hard work of the captains of industry, which no statistics can measure.

The past few years have witnessed dramatic changes in the world we live in. The processes of history which usually move at a glacial pace, have coalesced into a veritable avalanche. No country is immune to these changes. Adjustments are required in policies both foreign and domestic. The future will belong to those societies that display adaptability to change and an ability to manage change without their political, economic and social fabric being torn apart by the strains and stresses inherent in change.

One of the reasons for Japanese economic success is the unique blend of social and human values and modern technology Japan has achieved. Traditional values of harmony, courtesy, the spirit of service, and above all the love of excellence and perfection have created a unique industrial and management culture with its emphasis on reliability, quality and a long-term perspective.

To countries like India, which have a rich and varied cultural heritage as well as an intense urge to modernise their economies, Japan is perhaps of the most relevant interest.

But today I would like to place before you why we in India believe that an Indo-Japan economic partnership could be a success story as we enter the twenty-first century.

First, let me spell out the political context. India and Japan are fortunate not to have to carry any baggage of bitter memories from the past. In fact, there is an immense fund of goodwill for Japan in India. And each time I have been in this country, what has struck me most is the genuine sense of sympathy and affinity that the people of Japan have for India. There is no clash of interest between our two countries. Thus Japanese economic interaction with India, whether through trade or investment will take place in the most conducive political environment. I can assure you about this.

Second, let me tell you the facts about the political situation in India and about our internal stability. It has been a common experience that democracies are usually critical of other democracies and often more impatient with other democracies, as they are with themselves. Part of the reason lies in their greater transparency and the greater visibility of their inner conflicts and tensions. What should be of significance to us as democracies should be the ability of the society to manage change successfully, to contain stresses and strains it engenders and to forge ahead on the basis of the widest possible consensus. This last requirement, consensus, is crucial in a democracy. In judging the nature and pace of policy change in India, this key factor must be borne in mind.

The point that I wish to make to you is that in the more than 40 years since our independence, India has established itself as a vibrant and functioning democracy. There have been political crises and social tensions in the past, and will perhaps occur in the future too. Yet, what our political institutions have proved time and time again is that they have the strength and resilience to overcome difficulties and not be overwhelmed by them. As the latest example of this, I am here today, barely a year after India has been through a most traumatic political and economic crisis in recent memory, and I speak to you on behalf of a country once again back in the reckoning as one of the key nations which will contribute to the vigour and dynamism of Asia and the world well into the next century. Third, in terms of our economic relationship, what does India have to offer? I do not think that I need to catalogue our strengths to an audience that is as well informed as you are. But let me touch upon some of the points which perhaps need emphasis.

India has a vast and expanding market with a growing middle class whose purchasing power is increasing at a fast clip. This category of consumers is already over 200 million, more than the population of Japan. Japanese entrepreneurs are already aware of the importance of this Indian consumer. We see half-page,

sometimes full-page advertisements of Casio Watches, National Televisions and Sharp VCRs, virtually every day in our newspapers, despite the fact that these items are not readily available in India. India's consumers can provide you a stable and growing market at a time when your traditional markets in North America and Europe seem to be moving in the reverse direction towards protectionism.

Today, capital flows go hand in hand with technology flows. A country selected for investment must not only have the capacity to absorb capital but also modern technology. It must have the ability to adapt its management style to match new technology. I think India's record in this respect speaks for itself. I know that several Indian engineers are working for Japanese firms here on the outskirts of Tokyo, and by all accounts acquitting themselves very well. The technical skills of our engineers and the talents of our entrepreneurs and managers are of international standard. In computer software, we are programming an increasingly large part of Western world. I think it is time to recognise these strengths which India possesses and to take advantage of the vast reservoir of skills and talents that is already available in India. One thing is certain; human resources will never be constraint in your operations in India.

I must confess that in the recent past, much of the talent and energies of our entrepreneurs and managers were devoted to getting around the over-regulated system that evolved over the years since our independence. With the very thoroughgoing reforms we have instituted, you will now have Indian partners available to you, who are as devoted as you are to what they can do best—compete with each other and with the world, in producing quality goods and services for profit.

When my Government took office a year ago, there was surprise and scepticism over the very radical reforms we introduced. The question then asked most frequently was: Is this going to last? Won't these changes be reversed soon enough once the forces opposed to change get organized? Well, it is indeed remarkable progress for any Government that I have now to answer a very different question which is: Will the momentum of reforms be maintained? Today, no one in India or abroad has any doubts about the irreversibility of the reforms in India. The concern now is whether the pace of change will be maintained.

I would like to state unequivocally and unambiguously that the pace of reforms will not only be maintained but will be accelerated. The constraint is not ideology; it is the need to ensure political consensus behind the reforms. The reason why I state with such

confidence that the momentum will be maintained is precisely because I know I have the consensus required for this purpose. It is no longer important that I head what is strictly numerically, a minority government. Even with such a government, we were able to bring about far-reaching reforms in our economy. The key lies in fashioning a political consensus behind these policies. You in Japan with your own deep-rooted tradition of "nemawashi" should not find it difficult to understand this.

Many of the perennial complaints Japanese businessmen had of doing business in India, have been already dealt with. We are permitting majority equity holding in all but a few strategic sectors. Mr. Suzuki, who is present here, has already taken advantage of this provision and is raising his stake in Maruti to 50 per cent. That is his choice; he could go upto 51 per cent if he wants to. Capital imports have been liberalized. The Phased Manufacturing Programme (PMP) which a lot of Japanese companies objected to, has been abolished. Dividend repatriation has been made easier and will be further liberalized as our foreign exchange reserves improve. The rupee is already partially convertible and the trend is towards complete convertibility at least on the trade account. All these changes are already beginning to yield results. Their success is setting the stage for further reforms.

I know that several of you present here today will have some specific suggestions for improvement. Let me assure you that you will find us receptive and open to ideas for improving the investment and trade climate in India. At the same time, I would request you to keep in mind our current constraints and look at India from a longer term perspective.

Over the past few months, the number of Japanese Government and private economic missions visiting India has increased significantly. This is a good sign. I must make particular mention of the high-powered Economic Mission to India led by Dr. R. Ishikawa in January this year, which in a sense, set the stage for my meeting with you today. Certainly, as investors you must evaluate the opportunities in India with other alternatives available to you. We have patience. What I want to convey to you today is that when you do decide to make India your partner—and I have little doubt that you will—India will be ready to join you in an endeavour that is full of promise of peace and plenty in our region and beyond.

Shared Democratic Values

THANK YOU MR. Sakurauchi for your very warm words of welcome. May I also thank the Japan Institute of International Affairs for giving me this opportunity to meet such a distinguished group of Japanese scholars and diplomats.

One of the remarkable features of the relationship between India and Japan, apart from its long history, is its intellectual depth. India's first exports to Japan were perhaps sacred scriptures and philosophical texts. In more modern times, our intellectuals, Tagore and Tenshin Okakura, were among the first to be attracted to each other's country and culture.

Less than a century ago, it was Tagore and Tenshin Okakura who built bridges of understanding between India and Japan and proclaimed that Asia was one, the essence of that oneness being spirituality. The ideals of the Orient, consisting of harmony, oneness, the love for the Universal, which Okakura spoke of with such eloquence, struck a responsive chord among the youth of India at the turn of the century. Indians found the same spirit of "Advaita" or the essence of indivisibility in all creation, in the Japanese philosophy of life. The spirit of "living Advaitism in Japan which welcomes the new without losing the old", inspired countless Indians then, as it does today.

Seventy-six years ago, in this city of Tokyo, Rabindranath Tagore spoke of the "message of India to Japan". He spoke of the hope that Japan had infused in the heart of all Asia. He referred to the similar reverence for the past, respect for the departed and family relationships that existed in both India and Japan. The ideal of "maitri"—the intimate relationship between man and man and man and nature—as Tagore put it, is a seminal theme of both our cultures.

Thus, while the year 1992 marks the fortieth anniversary of the formal establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Japan, the relationship between our peoples and our cultures goes far far back into antiquity. It is already more than a millenium since Bodhisena, an Indian Buddhist monk, came to Japan and was present at the consecration of "Daibutsu", the great Buddha at the Todaiji Temple at Nara. Daruma, the Zen patriarch, who is

so revered today in Japan, is none other than the Indian master Bodhidharma. Nevertheless, anniversaries like these provide us a useful opportunity to look back over what we have achieved in the past, and much more significantly, to view the future of our relationship in a changing and rapidly evolving world. This, therefore, is an occasion for us to look at the many sources of strength and renewal in India-Japan relations.

Contemporary relations between our two countries are structured on the foundations laid immediately after the Second World War. Indira, the young elephant from the forests of Mysore, was gifted to the children of Japan by Shri Jawaharlal Nehru in 1949. It became a fitting symbol of “peace and affection between Japan and the Republic of India”. Forty years ago in June 1952, the Treaty of Peace between India and Japan was signed in Tokyo. The Treaty declared, “there shall be firm and perpetual peace and amity between India and Japan and their respective peoples”. Prime Minister Nehru was one of the first Asian leaders to visit Japan after the War.

When we look back to those early days, we cannot but be struck by Nehru’s vision of the role that Japan would eventually play in both Asia and the world. Not many shared Nehru’s vision in the immediate aftermath of the World War. Not many saw the rebirth and resurgence of Japan from the debris of the war. However, a strong sense of sympathy bound India and Japan together. This is the reason why the two countries have consistently stood by each other, if not always together, in the past four decades. If India worked consciously to restore Japan’s role in the shaping of the post-war world, it was Japan which chose India for the first ODA credits to foster our economic development. The exchange of visits between the Prime Ministers of the two countries in 1957 was truly epoch-making and significant. Echoing Tenshin Okakura, Prime Minister Nehru spoke of the three leading nations of Asia—Japan, China and India, establishing friendly relations for the benefit of all Asians. In November-December 1960, the present Emperor of Japan, then Crown Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko visited India and laid the foundation-stone of the India International Centre, which was raised as a cultural and intellectual centre on the model of the International House of Japan.

The experience of the past forty years have only served to underline that there is much that India and Japan can do together building on the bonds of sympathy and conflict-free relations that we have enjoyed in the past. There is an immense fund of goodwill for Japan in India and we were not at all surprised when a recent poll found that Japan was the most popular country amongst Indians.

It is true that the inflexibilities and the stereotypes of the Cold War cast a shadow over our relationship. One cannot deny a feeling that more might have been achieved in the 60s and 70s. It is possible too, that to the Japanese, who see themselves as a relatively homogenous people, India may at times, appear bewildering in its variety. Those of you, who have visited India know that this is not the reality. India is not a recent political invention. It was first unified in the third century B.C. when the Mauryan empire was founded, and the vision of a united country has remained ever since through successive centuries of Indian political life. Underlying the political concept of India is the continuing unity of India's civilisation and way of life with its remarkable ability to absorb and encompass the many cultures that came to her shores. It is this ability that has provided the soil for parliamentary democracy to flourish. If you see newspapers with stories of tension and conflict in India, these should be regarded as an inevitable part of the process of social and economic transformation in an ancient civilisation. What is noteworthy is that amidst the push and pull of these developments, the resilience of Indian democracy has been amply demonstrated.

Visiting Japan today, my impressions are somewhat different than during my earlier visits. It seems to me that today we have a window of opportunity in our relations. Cold War thinking and protective economic policies that were responsible for putting constraints on our relations earlier, no longer apply today. The fundamental changes that mark the world situation today after the end of the Cold War offer new possibilities for the strengthening of our relations. On the economic side, the adoption of liberal economic policies and reforms, are bringing into full play India's growing market, professional capabilities and skilled labour force, thereby offering many attractive opportunities to Japanese investors.

Our economic reform programme is intended to bring about structural transformation in the Indian economy and to make India a full-fledged player in the global market. Foreign investment will be a key element in this process of integration with the global market and we expect that a considerable part of this investment will come from Japan. We have substantially deregulated trade and industry and liberalised the environment for foreign investment. As a result of these initiatives and successful negotiations with various bilateral and multilateral donors, our foreign exchange reserves have improved considerably. We have also successfully controlled inflation through measures such as cuts in the budget deficit. I am certain that with all these changes and others which

will follow, the experience of investment in India will be both rewarding and profitable.

Japan has contributed in no small measure to India's economic development. Some of the strains of rice that helped us in our green revolution, which enabled India to increase her grain production, were developed from Japanese strains. I still remember the widespread adoption of line-planting of paddy seedlings in our villages during the early fifties. We called it the Japanese method of rice cultivation. Japan's ODA is one of the largest external inputs into our development and has gone into various sectors ranging from energy to environment, covering almost every sector of crucial human needs. I would like to express our sincere appreciation for Japan's contribution to our development.

The world situation as it is emerging today, has been characterised as one of growing "multipolarity". The concept of global interdependence is widely articulated, but a balanced situation of such interdependence is yet to emerge. The striking images of today's world "beyond frontiers" are those of boatloads of refugees, immigrant workers, innocent people fallen prey to senseless terrorism, and the rise of ethnic particularism and religious nationalism. The basic divide in the world today is not one of conflicting ideologies, but that of the widening rift between the developed and developing nations. The thinking of the Cold War has been transcended by economic protectionism, by the recourse to aid conditionalities, and by the mechanisms of intrusive diplomacy.

For India, as for most developing nations, the pursuit of a non-aligned foreign policy is even more relevant today than ever before. Non-alignment basically consists of the espousal of the rights of nations to independence and development, regardless of the bloc phenomenon. Whether there is one bloc or more at a given moment, the urge of a non-aligned country would continue to be to maintain its independence, to take decisions according to its lights, not tagging itself in advance to others. The Non-Aligned Movement is a standing example of decision-making by consensus and consensus has to provide the methodology for the future in order to accommodate the economic, political, technological and military realities that have emerged since the end of the Cold War. Accommodating change through consensus today is necessary to prevent explosions tomorrow. The priorities in international relations today should centre on the democratisation of the United Nations, the elimination of all nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, and the tackling of the root economic and social causes of

resentment between the haves and have-nots. The chimera of hegemony must not be pursued.

On nuclear proliferation, an issue which has always been one of our central concerns, we see an opportunity which we hope the world will not miss, just because of the narrow interests of a few nuclear weapon states. If there was ever any justification for nuclear weapons, there is none now. This hardly needs any elaboration. We in India have always supported the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. This would involve a binding commitment by all the present nuclear weapon states to eliminate all their nuclear weapons, matching commitments by threshold states not to cross the threshold, and verification of these commitments with clear time-frames for their implementation. As steps towards this goal, we envisage a convention on the non-use of these unusable weapons, a verifiable freeze on the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes, a suspension of all nuclear weapons tests, and negotiations on general and complete disarmament. India, like Japan, is one of the few states which chose consciously not to manufacture nuclear weapons even though she could have. Countries like ours should speak with one voice on these issues as the conscience of humanity.

This brings me to how Japan's constructive engagement with India, and our region of South Asia, can be increased. Our respective approaches to the outside world are informed by a spirit of pragmatism, realism and mutual accommodation. We have strongly endorsed and supported the call made by Japan's former Prime Minister Mr. Kaifu when he visited India two years ago, for the building of a broader and deeper relationship between Japan and South Asia in the areas of politics, economics and culture.

Today, when Japan's attainment of a level of power that obliterates the memories of the Second World War, and the ongoing debate within this country and outside about the contributions that Japan can make to international affairs, let me say that we welcome Japan's constructive engagement in the reconstruction of the world order. We understand Japan's desire to use its great economic power wisely for its national interests as well as international prosperity. We would welcome economic co-operation with Japan in the field of improvement of infrastructure in our country, and a host of other fields of research and development, and in participation in employee-training programme in Japanese businesses. We fully understand and share Japan's desire to build a new international order that ensures peace and security, respects freedom and democracy, secures the prosperity of the world under an open and multilateral economic system, preserves an environment in which

people can lead rewarding lives, and establishes stable international relations based on dialogue and co-operation. We are aware of Japan's desire to avoid any regionalism by defining itself only in Asian terms, while at the same time giving its support to intra-regional co-operation in fora like the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation Forum or APEC. Indeed, it is the success of Japan, the Asian NIEs and ASEAN that have in a way contributed to the dynamic revision in plans and policies for foreign investment in India, and the rest of the South Asian region in recent years.

Japan's contribution in trade and direct investment in India has indeed been very small, although in terms of ODA, Japan is our largest donor. The relations of South Asian Countries with Japan have been aptly characterised as "amazingly small in the past and present". Japan mainly imports raw materials and fishery products from countries in our region. While Japan's direct foreign investment has played a crucial role in the development of the Asian NIEs and ASEAN, Japanese investment has been very small in our region. Whatever the reasons for the lack of such investment in the past, the new climate created by our economic reforms has dramatically altered the situation and created new opportunities for Japanese investment in India. Japan's past investment in India has been marked by a few success stories. Among them is Maruti Udyog Ltd., a joint venture with Suzuki Motors, which ranked seventh in 1988, in the 200 rankings of Japanese firms abroad in terms of total sales.

The visit of Prime Minister Nakasone to India in 1984, and the visit of the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to Japan in 1985, began a new phase in our bilateral relations. These visits achieved mutual understanding of the different perspectives and the historic and geographic compulsions which led each of us to adopt the foreign policy postures that we chose. Today, we move even beyond that. Today, there have been dynamic and substantial changes in relationships between countries in Asia and the world. Globally, power is increasingly diffused. India has improved her relations with most of her neighbours in South Asia, and with China. The dynamism of this region has begun to claim India's attention. In this scenario, we look forward to building a positive relationship with Japan.

I myself see no conflict of interest between India and Japan in the emerging world situation. Today, we share a common interest in Asian peace and security which will enable India and other countries to concentrate on economic development. India has welcomed Japan's constructive engagement in the world because

we see this as buttressing India's own peace, stability and development. This is a foreign policy approach that is based not only on self-interest but on shared democratic values and on a shared commitment to peace. The future, as I see it, is really bright and the possibilities are immense.

Furthering the Cause of Friendship

THANK YOU VERY much for having arranged this occasion in this marvellous traditional setting for me to meet with the members of the Indo-Japanese Association and the Dietmen's League for India-Japan friendship.

Your Association has been furthering the cause of friendship between India and Japan for ninety years. This is indeed a long time in international relations. Much has changed in these ninety years. But one thing has remained constant, the friendship between the Indian and Japanese peoples and their support for each other in their major concerns. When India was struggling to achieve independence, when Japan was re-entering international society and now that India is embarked on the task of improving the life of her people, Japan and India have stood together.

To a very great extent this would not have been possible without the sort of groundwork that your Association has provided in the past. In seeking to build the relationship between India and Japan, the Association has been fortunate in being able to draw upon individuals like you, and on the indefatigable service of Mr. Misumi who has now spent over 50 years in this work. It has also been able to draw on the smooth and friendly relationship between our two countries. We are all aware of the contribution that the Association and the Diet members, League have made to the friendship between our peoples. I would like to use this occasion today to place on record the appreciation of the Government of India for this contribution.

When the Association was founded in 1902 by one of Japan's most distinguished Prime Minister, Marquis Shigenobu Okuma, and

by Baron Eiichi Shibusawa, they were impelled by the dream of a resurgent Asia, whose unity was promoted through a closer relationship between India and Japan. Today that vision can be described as being much closer to reality. I am sure that your Association will continue its constructive efforts to build understanding and trust between the citizens of our two countries. We are now entering into a very new world, where I hope it will be possible for your Association to also fulfil a new role, fully in keeping with the ambitious goals set for it by its founders and in keeping with the changing times that we live in.

I wish you every success in the future, and yet another ninety years of successful endeavour in the cause of the friendship between the peoples of India and Japan.

An Enduring Partnership

I WAS HERE in Osaka ten years ago during a visit to Japan. I still have very vivid memories of the tremendous drive and energy of the people of the Kansai area who have contributed in no small measure to the Japanese "economic miracle."

The Kansai area is rich in terms of cultural heritage. The ancient capitals of Nara and Kyoto are both located in this region. For many centuries, it has been the Kansai area of Japan which has been her window to the rest of the world. It has been, in particular, Japan's bridge to the rest of Asia. It comes as no surprise to me, therefore, that Osaka and the Kansai region, in general, lead in terms of Japan's economic interaction with fellow Asian countries. India itself feels greater cultural affinity with this part of Japan, which also happens to be the base of Indian settlement in Japan, particularly in Kobe.

I am, therefore, extremely gratified to have this opportunity of speaking to you as a fellow Asian and as representative of a country with which Japan has enjoyed close cultural interaction through the ages, and is now poised on the threshold of a new and mutually rewarding economic partnership as well.

I have had a very useful series of meetings with Japanese political and business leaders in Tokyo. I was gratified to find that there is

keen interest in developing closer political, economic and cultural ties with India. There was appreciation of the bold and far-reaching economic reforms that my Government has initiated. I was reassured by the support and encouragement extended to us in both maintaining as well as accelerating the pace of our reforms.

When my Government came into office last year, we were facing a difficult political as well as economic situation. Soon after taking office, we put in place a programme of macro-economic stabilisation as well as structural reforms. I am happy to say that we have achieved satisfactory results in putting the economy back on an even keel and in setting the stage for a period of high but balanced growth. Much remains to be done but I can assure you that we are unflinching in our determination to go ahead on the path that we have chosen. The process is irreversible and enjoys broad political consensus.

Our aim is to make India an economy which is competitive and outward looking and fully integrated with the emerging global market. The emphasis will now be on creating an economic environment in which private entrepreneurs will be encouraged to invest, the public sector will operate more efficiently and foreign investors will be welcomed into India in a much bigger way than in the past.

Among the reforms which would be of interest to you, I would particularly wish to touch upon the following:

- (i) We have carried out large scale deregulation in industrial licensing;
- (ii) Import licensing controls have been removed and a process of reducing the level of tariff protection has been initiated;
- (iii) We have introduced partial convertibility of the Rupee and we intend to move to full convertibility eventually;
- (iv) Our policy on foreign investment has radically altered to encourage foreign investors to invest in India with majority ownership, if they so desire. This has been followed up with liberalisation of foreign exchange regulations. Key sectors of the economy which were formerly reserved for the public sector, are now open to foreign investment, including the power sector and hydro-carbon sector; and
- (v) A major reform of the capital market has been undertaken and reform of the financial sector is under way.

I would invite you to come to India and see for yourself the radical changes that are taking place and that will make investing in India a profitable and rewarding experience.

I need not remind you that India is one of the largest economies of Asia as well as of the world. We offer you a large and expanding market. We have a vast pool of trained manpower as well as managerial skills. In addition, we have a political environment that is stable. Democratic institutions have taken deep root in India and have provided more than four decades of political stability and continuity despite the strains and stresses inherent in any developmental process.

The Asian continent is a remarkable story. The dynamic economies of Asia-Pacific have out-stripped other regions in terms of economic growth. At a time when traditional markets in Europe and North America are becoming increasingly protectionist, this region must find the sources for its continuing dynamism from within the region itself. With its now outward orientation and growing integration with the global market, India can become a major factor in sustaining growth and development throughout Asia. We can contribute our inherent strengths for the well-being of this region, whether it is in terms of our high level of technical skills or in terms of the vast and expanding market that will be increasingly available to the investors and producers of Japan and other countries in Asia-Pacific.

I began my remarks by pointing to the role of the Kansai region as a bridge between Japan and the rest of Asia. Before I conclude, I would like to invite you to join India in a mutually rewarding economic partnership that can transform the political and economic landscape of this entire region. India and Japan can co-operate with each other in bringing both peace and prosperity to the whole of Asia.

As I leave the shores of Japan to return to India, I take back with me the most pleasant memories of my brief stay in your beautiful country. Visiting Kyoto and its beautiful temples and monuments brought back memories of the longstanding historical and cultural ties between our people. Today in Osaka, I witnessed the technological excellence and economic dynamism of the Japanese people. I return to India convinced that our two countries can build an enduring partnership that draws upon our respective strengths and is nourished by the immense goodwill that exists between the peoples of our two countries.

VII
Press Conferences
and Interviews

Secularism, Non-Alignment and Removal of Poverty

QUESTION : How do you see the progress so far of the economic adjustment and the restructuring programme?

PRIME MINISTER : By and large, it is progressing according to plan. There are still some loose ends to be tied up; some legislation perhaps has been passed but it is only a question of time when we will be able to complete the legislative measures, plus the consequential subordinate legislation, which is even more important from the point of view of implementation.

QUESTION : What legislation?

PRIME MINISTER : You see there are rules to be dismantled, bodies to be cut and procedures to be completely recast or maybe abolished. All this pruning and cutting is there, the maze of rules which has also been added to and modified over the years. So, while the goal is to steer clear of all these rules, to make them conform to the new policy without any contradictions, this is a very perplexing task. I wouldn't say they are doing it very quickly but I would say that yes, considering the complications, it is going ahead. In any case, I am there to speed them up.

QUESTION : One issue on which the government's expectations have not been fulfilled is control of prices. Why do you think inflation continues to be at the level it does? Is the government going to change the strategy of controlling inflation?

PRIME MINISTER : Actually, the figures that have come to me about the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) do show some downward trend but that is not being fully reflected in the retail prices. Over the last three to four days, I have been told that the retail prices of edible oil have come down by a few rupees. But all this really doesn't add up to anything considerable; we have to go a long way in that. We are monitoring the programme and the price structure almost every day. I must say that we have not really hit upon any single method of programme to bring down prices. What we should aim at is to arrest further increase in the first instance. Then I think we will be able to do something about vegetables something about oil. About foodgrains, part of the increase is because of our own action in increasing the prices. But how much is on account of our price raising and how much the traders have

themselves jacked up, that is a matter which we are going into carefully....

QUESTION : The expectation was that price increase this year would be kept down to the single-digit level....

PRIME MINISTER : Well, it is not single digit but it is around 12.

QUESTION : No, it is 13 plus.

PRIME MINISTER : No, it came down to 12. I don't know what it means in terms of actual purchases in the shops. But that is one index we always go into. Then, in any case, the reflection of the WPI in the retail prices does take some time. I am not happy about the situation but I must say that we are trying to grapple with the problem in right earnest. We are not unaware of it. We are not complacent about it.

QUESTION : The danger that inflation has is that in an effort to control it and by doing so through cutting money supply, you force recession in industry. Then there is the danger of stagnation plus inflation and most adjustment programmes around the world have in fact run into problems because of this stagflation. Do you see this kind of danger now here...?

PRIME MINISTER : Yes, this has been pointed out to me. Well, I am not making any policy statement but we have to take some measures to meet this possible stagflation. We have to prevent it like what we have done on money supply, interest rates, curb on imports. Many people say that since our foreign exchange position is a lot better than what we started with, it is time to relax these things. In fact, this opinion is coming loud and clear from the commerce ministry.

QUESTION : But do you see the need for changing strategy of controlling inflation, that the focus so far was on controlling money supply and controlling fiscal deficit, which are both demand measures, demand management, whereas a lot of inflation today is being caused by supply side factors. You have import compression, so there is shortage; you have devaluation, so costs go up. Does the government intend to change this strategy of controlling inflation?

PRIME MINISTER : Well, it can't be a single track strategy. It has to be multi-pronged. We have to relax curbs on imports, for instance. I am very clear about that. But to what extent and in what areas? You see, once you open the floodgates, maybe within a few months you will find that you have landed in a totally difficult situation. That is why the finance minister is a little careful; he is still reluctant but it is only a question of a short time before both

ministries (finance and commerce) are able to hit upon some method by which the compulsions of both will be partially met.

QUESTION : There was also the question of inflationary expectations. Expectations themselves seem to be causing price increases, particularly in the foodgrain area where the kind of increase that one is seeing over the last 12 months is completely unwarranted by the realities of the economic situation. So, how do you break those expectations....

PRIME MINISTER : How much is warranted by the price increase induced by us and how much is the actual level now; the difference between the two is unwarranted. You don't have much of machinery or power to bring that totally under control. You can persuade, you can take recourse to certain methods which will convince them (traders) that this is not ultimately a profitable policy. But all this depends on who is doing it. It varies from state to state and place to place. So, we don't have a situation where you just clamp down a law or make use of an existing law. Once you start doing that you know the result. One has to be extra careful in even making use of the law that is available. We have seen the results of that also. From past experience and from what we find to be the present situation, we have to think of some steps which will not land us into a worse situation. At the same time, we will not be just doing nothing and waiting for things to happen by themselves. We have to take some steps.

QUESTION : The danger, apart from inflation itself is what it might mean for economic and political attitudes, unrest amongst the people because you had double-digit inflation for two consecutive years. This could also upset the political mood and it seems that certainly a lot of concern that is there within your government and even in the Congress party, is primarily fuelled by worries of how you are going to grapple with the situation. So, what is your assessment of the political mood?

PRIME MINISTER : The political mood is certainly one to worry about and I have no doubt on that. And that includes me. It is not as if there is one camp holding one view and another camp holding another. One who is running the government may hold the same view and still not be talking about it always. I don't think there is any big difference in that. In fact, in the next few days we would like to have a kind of brainstorming within ourselves, within the party and the government. I am sure we will come to the same conclusion. I don't see any big difference in that. There are shades we can always reconcile with and come to some conclusion on which each of us agrees.

But the point is, what are the steps, how do you go about implementing them. Experience shows that when you have inflation at this level, it takes about 18 to 24 months to bring it down to a single digit. This is what my old colleagues who have been in the Finance Ministry, and who have successfully done it, told me. Now, 18 months is a stretch of time which I don't have. I cannot ask anyone to wait for so long, it will have to be telescoped, it will have to be much shorter. I am conscious of that. We are only waiting for the next harvest. That is one important occasion when we can pause and take stock and go ahead. There will be just about a month or so for wheat. The first crop of rice is already there. If the second crop, that is the *rabi*, in areas where you have irrigation, has a good prospect, then we are a little easy....

QUESTION : The impression is that the Public Distribution System (PDS) is being diluted. For example, procurement of wheat has declined despite more production (production was 54 million tonnes and procurement was only 8.75 million tonnes). So the impression is that the government doesn't want to distribute these things, market forces take over....

PRIME MINISTER : No, it is not like that at all. In fact, now more than even before, we are determined to have the new PDS with more items to be made available. You must have heard of these 1,700 blocks which we have chosen. Personally, I think that is a very far-reaching measure. My difficulty is how to implement it the way I want it. Because it is not in my hands, I can't do it sitting in Delhi. So, I have been trying to talk to Chief Ministers, persuading them, getting them interested and tying-up all the loose ends. The stuff doesn't reach the village fair price shop. That has been the most important bottleneck so far. I have a long experience of civil supplies both at the state level and here; I find that if you are able to reach the stuff to the last village where there is a fair price shop, you can expect some results, some relief to the people. But if it is sold out at the whole-sale point, then it only means that you are spending your money and you are driving the stuff into the big black market. That is not on and I think we should take all effective steps to stop it. We have tried to make this foolproof; I don't know whether you have a copy of the whole (the new PDS) scheme that was drawn up after a good deal of work during the last five months. It was launched on the first of January. Every small thing was gone into; we had a number of meetings with the state government officials, Chief Ministers, etc. I have reason to believe that this has come out better than ever before. Now we have to see how it is being implemented. That monitoring also is going on but the machinery is not perfect. I must admit it, because

the areas are so different, the conditions are so different. But we have taken the most difficult areas because that is where the relief should go first—the hill areas, the desert areas, the tribal areas.

QUESTION : Do you see a problem of political acceptance of the overall reform programme within the party?

PRIME MINISTER : There is no problem, What I said is that there is general acceptance in the party ranks, if you wish to know, and at the level of the people.

QUESTION : Then why is there this price rise?

PRIME MINISTER : Don't talk of price rise. That is a separate matter. We have brought about a reform. Is it right or wrong? I am prepared to convince anyone starting from a small village, that this reform is necessary.

QUESTION : Yes. But do you see discontent simmering in the party and in your government?

PRIME MINISTER : There is nothing simmering. If there is discontent, it includes me, that is what I have said. No distinction between one camp and another....

QUESTION : The economists are referring to this as the “abstract concept”....

PRIME MINISTER : It is not abstract at all.

QUESTION : Some people feel that we are being forced to take a particular course....

PRIME MINISTER : Step by step by step, I can convince people. I mean I have no doubt on that.

QUESTION : No, for example, you brought in the Exit Policy. Are the people ready to accept that?

PRIME MINISTER : Yes, Yes. I am prepared to tell them why all this has happened. I have been telling them. I am doing nothing else. What I am telling the people in my public meetings is nothing very sweet, very pleasant to hear...

QUESTION : But Sir, how long will they accept inflation?

PRIME MINISTER : Let us see. I think the people are more sensible than we think.

QUESTION : If one takes the message that may be emanating, which is that on the one hand we are losing jobs and on the other hand....

PRIME MINISTER : I think no people are losing jobs.

QUESTION: They will begin to lose jobs out of the EXIT Policy.

PRIME MINISTER : No. I thought that has been made quite clear.

QUESTION : The other day there was that announcement of (reduction of) 1000 government jobs....?

PRIME MINISTER : That is not because of the reform. That is because this machinery has overgrown anyway. Any sensible person should do it. It was attempted many times before, it was left halfway. I happen to be a little more intent on seeing it through. That is all. Even if we had been in a very good condition, it would have been necessary because the Central government has been just growing and growing....

QUESTION : No, the point in question is not that it is not necessary or necessary or not good....

PRIME MINISTER : But even these people are not losing their jobs. If there is a vacant job and I think it is not necessary to fill, nobody has lost a job.

QUESTION : But you are curbing employment in that sense?

PRIME MINISTER : Oh no! This kind of bloated and artificial employment is not what a developing country can thrive on. You see, it is not employment for employment's sake, it is not like a *dharamsala* where people get things *gratis*. The work to be done and the number of persons to do that work has to have some relationship.

QUESTION : I would like to focus on the perception rather than the reality. In reality, nobody has any option but to go ahead with this programme. But the perception could be that on the one hand prices of articles of daily consumption are going up and on the other hand people perceive an eventual threat to their jobs. Collaborations are being signed for breakfast cereals, cars, seemingly luxury items. This is one set of perceptions. Further, there is no money for production within the industry, though there is money for people to play in the stock markets. There is an overall message that goes through about who is benefitting and who isn't.

PRIME MINISTER : When you talk of perception, I must say that what we should be talking about is the total perception of where the country is going according to the people, what the people think of the government, what the people think of its programmes in overall terms. It is possible that an individual or a section of people is not satisfied with a part of the programme. I think the total perception—I have no doubt—of the people is that we are on the right track. We are likely to encounter difficulties in the short run, but we will get over those difficulties in course of time. This is the general perception which I believe exists.

QUESTION : But to take another aspect of the perception; no matter how much you, as Prime Minister, and the finance minister point

out that these are programmes that were required, that we would have to implement in any case, and that if we did not get IMF funding, it necessarily poses that much more....

PRIME MINISTER : No, it is not for IMF at all, it is because of our own....

QUESTION : Yes, our own perception, but there is a feeling that this is foreign-dictated. How do you address that perception?

PRIME MINISTER : I can only explain to the people. They have to believe me. It is one word against another.

QUESTION : If the commitments have been made in writing to them (the IMF) before they are announced....

PRIME MINISTER : I am telling you it is one word against another. That should be the end of it because I don't know how to prove anything to you....

QUESTION : What is the explanation then that you are giving to the people? That it is not IMF dictated but it is because of our own....

PRIME MINISTER : I am telling them that this is necessary for us. If you tell me it is not necessary, I will be convinced. But if you tell me that someone has told you therefore it is wrong, then any villager can understand how illogical it is.

QUESTION : We get the feeling that some of the political parties which publicly oppose some of the government actions as part of the economic reform are privately supporting you.

PRIME MINISTER : I wouldn't like to tell you publicly what they tell me privately. It wouldn't be proper.

QUESTION : But you are not answering the question.

PRIME MINISTER : No, I am not. I am refusing to answer the question. You be clear about it. I am refusing to answer the question. Don't think that I am answering the question. If I had to answer, I would have answered you directly.

QUESTION : Is there a difference between a private posture and a public posture?

PRIME MINISTER : That is what I am saying. A man in private is different, normally I mean. He is not the same as he is in public; otherwise there wouldn't be two worlds.

QUESTION : On matters of policy like this where the public is concerned, why should there be a public posture and a private one?

PRIME MINISTER : If you had been in a political party you wouldn't be asking these questions.

QUESTION : But a Minister should not take a different view in public and in the Cabinet.

PRIME MINISTER : You will have to understand that here you are making changes in a policy. No one is absolutely sure. Why don't you take the genuine path; every one has doubts, has misgivings. You succeed and your misgivings go away. In fact, you start saying that you had initiated it and everything is being done at your instance. If you don't succeed, you say, did I not tell you so. This is human nature. I don't see anything extraordinary in this.

QUESTION : One reason for concern is that there are at best two or three Ministers who are publicly supporting the reform programme....

PRIME MINISTER : Well, that is your own perception. My own feeling—not only feeling, my personal knowledge—is that nothing has been kept from any Minister and I have the full co-operation of all my colleagues. In fact, when I discuss with some of them, I come up with misgivings. I cannot lay bare the functioning of my ministry before you. Now you go on adding to your doubts, there is no way I can clear them.

QUESTION : It looks like that these reforms are being carried out without discussion on proper platforms.

PRIME MINISTER : That is absolutely wrong. It is done at the party level; the Working Committee had endorsed the reforms and from time to time we discuss (them). In the Cabinet we have discussions. Whenever we have any doubt or whenever we feel the need to discuss something, we are doing so because you have to examine alternatives. The Cabinet is not a debating society. You debate but you have to zero in on a policy and a step to be taken—yes or no. And, when it is yes, you do have doubts but it is yes; when it is no, you do have doubts, but it is no.

QUESTION : But the question was that the perception outside is that reforms are being dictated (by the IMF) and this is further strengthened by the fact that the people who are implementing this, belong to the same school of thought.

PRIME MINISTER : I just do not know what these perceptions are about. I go to the people. I have got a rapport with the ordinary people, lakhs and lakhs of them. I am on a very strong wicket. I can convince them. They understand this, I have no doubt about that. On the whole, I think that the reform has been well received. The fact that this reform is likely to run into rough weather has been realised.

QUESTION : What specific aspects of the reform programme worry you?

PRIME MINISTER : Every reform should start on a note of worry. Otherwise, it is no reform, particularly if you are intent about it. If it is a reform for cosmetic purposes, you need not worry. But if it is a real reform, as it is in this case, you have to worry because you just have to change so many things. But you have to disregard this worry. You have to solve these things—these hurdles one after the other—which we have been doing.

QUESTION : What you are really saying is that the programme requires a change of mental mould of 40 years of thinking.

PRIME MINISTER : Yes. Certainly.

QUESTION : Then you need a large public awareness campaign and a communication exercise on a steady basis to bring about the change....

PRIME MINISTER : I agree. And, I also agree that in that respect we have not done all that there was to do and could have been done.

Again, there are many reasons for that. You are not starting with a full-dress programme after having thought it through in all its aspects. After all, the conditions in which we inherited this situation did not allow us any time; we had to do some fire-fighting and we are still in a way fire-fighting. I must admit that. So, this has not been a programme which has taken years and years to prepare. All the loose ends have not been tied. All the fine print has not been gone into. But having started, we have to think even while we are moving ahead. We are doing that. And when questions come up, we don't have all the answers; we have partial answers. If a partial answer comes, any one can raise an objection. Partial answers always attract objections. So that is the process we are going through.

Things are getting clearer as we go along and only then the education that we would undertake or we are undertaking at the moment becomes more effective. Otherwise you say something, you are not yourself clear about having said all that there is to say. Therefore, if people object or raise more questions, more doubts, then you shouldn't be surprised. This is a process we have to go through. I am looking at it totally pragmatically. Since nothing has been fully prepared on my side, I have to think while I move. I have to answer while I move. Sometimes, I have to take suggestions from others, which I have done. In many cases, villagers have come up and given me some suggestions that I had never thought about. If I have good rapport with the people, I have no doubt that this education will not be just one-sided. We will be acting, reacting with one another.

QUESTION : One of your Cabinet Ministers just said that we will not tolerate any dilution of the Nehruvian model of economic development. Do you think that you are diluting that now?

PRIME MINISTER : No, I don't think I am diluting it, and I am quite convinced that in fact, I have said it—if Nehru had been alive today he would endorse what we are doing. You see, the only thing is that Nehru was not Nehruvian. Nehru was Nehru. He gave a line. No great leader would ever like his followers, unworthy followers, to make a deity out of him.

QUESTION : Is it that your party is going through an ideological re-orientation now?

PRIME MINISTER : No, my case has always been that what Pandit Nehru gave us is capable of multiple interpretation. It could swing from one end to the other. There is no break in it. The commanding heights of the economy have been occupied by the public sector, I don't have any more money now. What would Nehru have done? I would like to know. If you have any greater insight into Nehru's thinking, you tell me. I am only asking people to come and join me. The public sector is totally saturated. I have no money. I cannot put more money into the public sector. Already, there are sick units; I have to look after them. So, I am asking Parliament, I am asking my critics, I am asking ideologues to tell me what I am supposed to do. But I need it, I need the investment. I am a simple person. I am not an economist but I want to know what the other way is.

QUESTION : Parliament has given you a mandate for 20 per cent equity selling which you have not been able to do even now.

PRIME MINISTER : Yes. Maybe it is not selling as we thought. But it is selling. Now suddenly somebody says why don't you sell all. These are all short-cuts and we don't want to take these short-cuts.

QUESTION : At this point of time, do you see a slowing down of the reform programme or an acceleration?

PRIME MINISTER : No, I think we are going at a pace at which we wanted to go. If there is any course correction in the speed, we will consider from time to time. I don't think there was any panic in which we had to rush with the programme.

QUESTION : There are two schools of thought. One is that you gradually do it and the other is that you do it with a big bang, that you frontload the whole programme and set the pace before the resistance builds up. Now, this is the budget season, a whole series of policies will be tied into the budget....

PRIME MINISTER : No, I am not a frontloader. I would go step by step. I would go carefully because it is a departure in certain directions and when it is a departure, people have to know why it is taking place. This is a democracy. I cannot ram anything down their throats and I don't want to. I don't believe in that. I would rather take it a day later and convince them because that ultimately has a more lasting effect. I am a believer in that and I am a believer in communication. Anyone who wants to controvert what I am saying is free to go to the people and tell them.

QUESTION : But for instance, there is this issue now of making the rupee fully convertible. I wonder whether you will do it now or later. On this kind of issue, would you be in favour of an immediate action or postponing it until the system stabilises?

PRIME MINISTER : I wouldn't take to any extremes. What I think is, in terms of the time frame again, we have to have a certain moderation. You see, you can't be a gambler in these things.

QUESTION : To come back to the question of people changing their minds on the basic issues, when we began our negotiating positions in the Uruguay Round, we took up certain positions and today we are being asked to accept the exact opposite of each of our basic negotiating positions. We said we will not negotiate patent services, we have done it. We said we didn't want to change our patent law, we have done it. We said we will not accept product pattern, we have done it or are doing it. On almost every major negotiated position and indeed some of the offers that we rejected earlier, we are being asked today....

PRIME MINISTER : Mr. Arjun Singh is heading a Cabinet Committee, it is a good idea, go and talk to him. He will like to be benefitted by your views.

QUESTION : Of course, we will be consulting Mr. Arjun Singh now, but the commitment has already been given.

PRIME MINISTER : No. There is nothing like commitments having been given and then consultations being started.

QUESTION : No, my point is different. The state of mind that we had earlier, it looks....

PRIME MINISTER : No, never mind the state of mind. We are in a situation and we want a way out. You are welcome to make a suggestion. You don't have to start with the assumption that we want to change everything. You don't have to start with questioning bonafides....

QUESTION : My question is not that. My question is getting people to accept today the exact opposite of the position the government adopted five years ago.

PRIME MINISTER : That is what I am saying. Today we are examining the package—a package which has been brought up on a take it or leave it basis as I understand it. I have not seen all the details but I am told that many countries, almost every country, has its own reservations about the package. It is possible that it may be universally rejected; or universally accepted; I don't know. But when it comes to India, we find that this package involves certain changes which normally we would not have made. Today, is that normal situation still existing and could we still take the same stand (as five years ago)? This is what the Cabinet Committee is going into.

QUESTION : The consultations are also on a selective basis, the kind of people you are talking to....

PRIME MINISTER : No, no. You give the list bhai, you give me a list of 1000 people, why a selected lot?

QUESTION : We print the list and say which people have been kept out?

PRIME MINISTER : No, no, tell me, who are those people?

QUESTION : It is the people who deal with this kind of situation; they have been kept out of these consultations.

PRIME MINISTER : The point is if there are people who you think should have been consulted, we are prepared to consult them but the point is after all the consultations, some other person might say that so and so has not been consulted, therefore you have not brought....

QUESTION : The consultation process is like going to....

PRIME MINISTER : ...I have great respect for Prabhu Chawla, but we can have any number of Prabhu Chawlas appearing later....

QUESTION : This consultation is something like Punjab....

PRIME MINISTER : That is very unfair....

QUESTION : Some specialists have been kept out?

PRIME MINISTER : I have not really said that you consult so and so, don't consult so and so.

QUESTION : Talking about Punjab, the Akalis have kept themselves out of the election process. How did you handle this? They could have been invited to fight in the elections, they were having some discussions with you and later on they were promised something but that could not be implemented, because you have been holding negotiations individually and collectively. What went wrong?

PRIME MINISTER : One thing I can tell you that I have promised nothing and have reneged on nothing. I have been talking to all leaders who are available, who are prepared to be talked to. I have

requested all of them and I hope there will be a fair participation. The only thing I would like to refute is that I promised something and went back on it. Even they will not say it. I want to know which leader has told you that I promised them something and I went back.

QUESTION : But some kind of package was being discussed.

PRIME MINISTER : Whatever it is. If I had promised something....

QUESTION : ...Not specifics, nobody has told me a specific thing, but...

PRIME MINISTER : One thing; they came with several ideas. I heard them. Now we sat in the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs (CCPA); we had similar consultations with the other people from Punjab. It so happens that I have one accord to which I am completely committed through my manifesto. I would not like to go into these things because what I am committed to is the Rajiv-Longowal Accord.

QUESTION : But why is it not being implemented?

PRIME MINISTER : I want a state government, I said. I have said this openly.

QUESTION : What is the relevance of these elections without the Akalis?

PRIME MINISTER : How do you say it is without the Akalis? Let us see what the relevance is.

QUESTION : What is your degree of confidence about the Akalis taking part in the elections?

PRIME MINISTER : No, I don't want to make decisions for them. I don't want to anticipate their decisions. You see, whichever way I say it, I will be saying the wrong thing, isn't it?

QUESTION : How is the situation now different than it was in June 1991?

PRIME MINISTER : I think it is better. It is definitely better in terms of the general people's desire for the elections; I think it is better.

QUESTION : Is there a general improvement in the security situation in the three troubled states? In Assam the ULFA has backed out, in Kashmir the governor said it is time to resume normal political activity and in Punjab where....

PRIME MINISTER : You see, I would prefer your commenting on it yourself rather than my....

QUESTION : But you might be having some perceptions about them.

PRIME MINISTER : I have. But it is better that intellectuals like you comment on it rather than my claiming something and suddenly someone taking it into his head to prove me wrong.

QUESTION : Even when people write too many editorials, you will...?

PRIME MINISTER : Even if you write too many editorials, that may happen (smiles). You see, the situation is there for anyone to see what has happened and is happening in Assam, in Kashmir. This is not for the Prime Minister to either comment or claim.

QUESTION : Okay. Then what are the reasons for improvement?

PRIME MINISTER : You can comment upon that also.

QUESTION : These are basic questions.

PRIME MINISTER : No, they are not basic questions, they are statements of fact for anyone to see. I would not like to comment on these matters because they are questions... the factors are well known.

Again, this does not just end with an interview, I have to deal with the situation.

QUESTION : Even the Home Minister made some statement that some of the problems are created by....

PRIME MINISTER : You must go to the Home Minister.

QUESTION : No, I was answering your question without putting one, that most of the improvement has taken place because now you are trusting the authorities you have....

PRIME MINISTER : No, you will not find me making any claims. I will only refer you to the situation as it is. If you think it is good, I am thankful. If there is anything to be done, I am open to your suggestions, anybody's....

QUESTION : Sir, what is the reason why Operation Rhino succeeded and Operation Bajrang did not?

PRIME MINISTER : You send some university people there and do a little on-the-spot survey.

QUESTION : Reporters can't do that, you think?

PRIME MINISTER : You see, this is not the time to make any comment. Maybe after six months I will. In fact, I will tell you more than what you want to know. This is a very delicate period. It will be very wrong on my part to claim anything, to assert anything as final. It is not done.

QUESTION : Mr. Prime Minister, has heading a minority government proved to be your strength or weakness?

PRIME MINISTER : A minority government is a minority government, what is the weakness....

QUESTION : Have you not been able to handle the situation better because you are in a minority government?

PRIME MINISTER : No, I am not in that kind of a minority government where, on every issue, I have to confront the opposition parties. I am running what is called a government which takes decisions or tries to take decisions on consensus. So it is the consensus part of it that is more important, not the minority part of it. And I have stressed innumerable times, even if I had been running a majority government, even if I had 300 seats, I would still say that decisions today need to be taken on certain consultation and consensus rather than by a single party merely because it has the majority. I have said it so many times and I mean it.

QUESTION : What is the degree of co-operation that you have got from the opposition?

PRIME MINISTER : I think it is good. I have no complaints.

QUESTION : Do you see it lessening now in the future, in the coming few weeks or months?

PRIME MINISTER : I don't think so. But naturally, when there is some difficulty being faced by the country, the opposition parties will certainly focus on it. You cannot expect any opposition party not to do that. But I don't see anything extraordinary in that. The difficulties are there for anyone to see, you see, I don't have to controvert the situation. I told you when you have a change, no one is 100 per cent sure about what is right and what is not so right. As you go along you learn. So, I have no difficulty on that.

QUESTION : But on major international issues, we find that BJP is much closer to you. Is it coincidental or is it by arrangement?

PRIME MINISTER : I don't know. I thought BJP and other parties may be having their own differences, but when it comes to a particular decision, I find that there is no great opposition from either of them. They may be voting differently for various reasons but when I consult them, when I discuss with them, I don't see any great unbridgable gap between (us on) what needs to be done on a particular issue.

QUESTION : The Congress has always prided itself as a party which will never have any truck with the BJP. But your offer of common candidates for Punjab elections.... don't you see that as endangering the Congress record?

PRIME MINISTER : Well, I think, if the Punjab situation warrants that; the Congress record is not so dear to me as the unity of the country. I always prefer the unity of the country over the Congress record; but I am not really on the Congress record, the point is

what do parties stand for and what do parties who stand for the same thing do? These are two different things. You distinguish. Parties are very like-minded with the Congress, but when it comes to voting, they are prepared to vote the Congress out. What do I do with them? We are running a government and if running this government is important for the country, I have to run it. It is that simple. Do I forsake my basics in this process? I emphatically say 'no'.

QUESTION : What do you perceive as your basics?

PRIME MINISTER : My basics are secularism, non-alignment, the removal of poverty, opening up of avenues for the younger generation, for the genius of the people to blossom forth; my basic (task) is to remove all that comes in the way of progress of individuals composing the nation, groups composing the nation (by making) opportunities available to different sections; all these barriers are to be removed. That is the kind of thing I am trying to bring about. I don't say that I am going to do it tomorrow. I am not that foolhardy or that unrealistic. But you have to have a vision, this is my vision and this is the vision of the Congress, if I have understood my own party.

QUESTION : Coming back to the minority question again, I find sometimes you are unable to handle Chief Ministers like Jayalalitha and Bangarappa. Of course, you have tried to bring them together on the negotiating table....

PRIME MINISTER : Who told you I have been trying to bring them together?

QUESTION : The government had given a statement that the Chief Ministers....

PRIME MINISTER : You show me one communication or one statement where I have said that they should come together and sit at a table.

QUESTION : You don't want them to sit together?

PRIME MINISTER : No, my point is the time has not come....

QUESTION : My perception may be wrong....

PRIME MINISTER : No, your perception is not only wrong, your reading also is wrong because I have never said that so far. I do feel that the situation is not ripe for them to come together and sit across the table. If I ask them to do it, it will not happen. I have been talking to both of them. I have spoken to both of them separately and I know what it is. I don't want anything to happen which will only result in nothing. You see, this is a situation where thousands of people have migrated. They have to come back,

normalcy has to come, and then one has to work one's way towards an amicable solution.

QUESTION : She has been able to dictate her terms, it seems?

PRIME MINISTER : Who?

QUESTION : Jayalalitha.

PRIME MINISTER : To whom?

QUESTION : To the Centre.

PRIME MINISTER : How?

QUESTION : By not coming here, not talking at the negotiating table.

PRIME MINISTER : I have never asked her to come and sit at the table. I am telling you for a fact. If anybody has reported otherwise, it is wrong. I am telling you in so many words that there was no communication from me to either of them to come and sit at the table. They came, they talked to me. Both of them talked to me, separately. Look at the statement which I made in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha; it doesn't say anywhere that I wanted them to come, that I am asking them to come and sit at a table here.

QUESTION : The kind of things which Bangarappa did, legal positions and legislative measures that turned into a confrontation with the Centre, precipitating the crisis the way he handled it. He did it because he might have imagined that he can't be fixed.

PRIME MINISTER : (Smiles) You (Prabhu Chawla) have written all that and now you are asking me to answer that. It's okay, let it remain in your papers.

QUESTION : Is it correct or...?

PRIME MINISTER : I don't want to say anything. I don't think I have to comment on any of these things. In a situation of high tension, people do things, governments do things and people have even resigned in such situations. I may remind you of what happened on the steel plant agitation. I may remind you what happened on the Salem..., on the Hindi agitation. Please go back into history a little. Nothing is happening for the first time today. We have a situation where people have to sort of respond to certain urges, some persons have to; naturally things happen which don't always in a normal situation. We are correcting all those things. We are bringing back everything on course and I think we will succeed, I am sure.

QUESTION : The organisational elections will be held as per the second schedule which you have announced?

PRIME MINISTER : What second schedule?

QUESTION : You extended it by a couple of days, the election process. Do you think they will be held by....

PRIME MINISTER : Yes, yes.

QUESTION : You told me that they will be held as per the first schedule, then there was a postponement by a couple of days?

PRIME MINISTER : That's okay. That is because of our compulsions of Parliament. If all the southern states' benches are empty (due to elections) how do I pass any Bill. We suddenly came up against that situation and we had to postpone it for 15 days.

QUESTION : Now you won't postpone it for another 15 days?

PRIME MINISTER : No. The schedule that has been given is going through.

QUESTION : Why is that it is going through now when the last time it was attempted there the talks of bogus membership etc, I think in 1982....

PRIME MINISTER : I really don't know why, if something was not done last year, it should not be done this year. I don't have to give reasons for it. It is possible that at that time we came up against something which was insurmountable. We did come up against something which was insurmountable in Parliament, so we postponed the election for 15 to 20 days.

QUESTION : One of the questions on international relations is that the government has responded to the changing international situation. Are you now not running the risk of being pressurised on a whole range of issues where one would not like to be pressurised?

PRIME MINISTER : Nobody will pressurise me on issues on which I have my opinions. But if it is expected that I should go against everything that anybody says, I think that is not a fair expectation.

QUESTION : For instance, would we go ahead with this Five-Nation Conference on the nuclear issue?

PRIME MINISTER : No.

QUESTION : Could we suggest an amended format?

PRIME MINISTER : I have said no already. Nobody has produced an amended format before me.

QUESTION : Sir, it seems to me that Pakistan is always suggesting one thing—South-East Asia peace initiative or a Five-Nation initiative—and our response is to just keep saying no. Do we want to make a proposal ourselves?

PRIME MINISTER : Well, we have the proposal made by Rajiv Gandhi.

QUESTION : And on Kashmir, is there any move to start?

PRIME MINISTER : What is there on Kashmir? My stand is very clear that Kashmir belongs to India, Kashmir is a part of India. If one part of Kashmir is not India, it has to be brought into India. So what else? If there is anything, there is the Shimla Agreement.

QUESTION : There was a statement that Article 370 is temporary.

PRIME MINISTER : I didn't say that. I don't subscribe to that view. I have said in my speech in the National Integration Council (NIC) that Article 370 will remain as long as the people of Kashmir want it. This is what Panditji also said.

QUESTION : Sir, what about that Proxy War that was talked about in the NIC meeting?

PRIME MINISTER : Proxy War was used in a particular context, which meant a particular thing and I do not know whether there has been cessation of those activities because it is winter now. This is not the season when you can make any judgement.

QUESTION : What is the Arab response to our vote on Zionism?

PRIME MINISTER : Nothing particular.

QUESTION : Is that what you expected?

PRIME MINISTER : I thought that was the right thing. Well, we had taken a position and we thought that things have changed, the merit of the matter warranted it.

QUESTION : What is the result of the Li Peng visit? Haven't we given too much by....

PRIME MINISTER : I have explained this quite a few times before. I don't think we have given anything fresh, we stuck to our positions. The net positive result has been that peace and tranquillity on the border is going to be maintained by regular meetings between commanders at the local level. As far as I can see, this is a new thing. If there are regular meetings between commanders on both sides...peace can be maintained. The agreements which we signed were all good agreements, useful agreements and if we go ahead with those, there will be closer relations between the two countries. The assertion that both of us are developing countries and we have a role to play jointly, coming in such categorical terms, is a positive thing.

QUESTION : Where does the government stand with regard to the Prasar Bharati and the private channel TV?

PRIME MINISTER : I think you are a little too early. You will have to ask this question later. We are going to review that matter.

We have had only one meeting, in fact, in which some further instructions were given to compile some data and material.

QUESTION : But is this perception correct that your immediate concern is only the legalisation or regulation of Cable TV?

PRIME MINISTER : We are going step by step. That is why we have not made any statement on what is being done. Nothing has been done which is capable of an announcement. We will come up with that.

QUESTION : What importance do you place on the private channels?

PRIME MINISTER : That is what I am saying, we will tell you everything...

QUESTION : How do you describe the year 1991, politically and economically, and what do you see the year 1992 as....

PRIME MINISTER : 1991 was turbulent. In 1992, let us hope that we will be in a better position.

QUESTION : What has been your most difficult moment as Prime Minister?

PRIME MINISTER : I don't know. It is too early to say that. I think the most difficult moments are still to come.

Towards Amicable Solutions

H.K. DUA : MR. Prime Minister, I want to know what are your priorities or what are the most pressing problems you have on your hand? My idea is to explore your mind on issues of national concern.

PRIME MINISTER : The problems what we face today in a way are all pressing and it is not easy to categorise them into most pressing, less pressing, just pressing or not pressing. That kind of strict categorisation is not possible. But as I see, we have two sets of problems which need continued attention. One is connected with the stability and unity of the country. For instance, there is a tendency to divide the society and disturb the harmony which has been brought about over the years. Something or the other can

always happen, one statement here and one incident there can heighten the tension.

The other is economic aspect. We brought about fairly far reaching package of economic reforms. It was not easy for such a change to take effect automatically. And in the course of steering it, one can step on the toes of some people. Maybe for some reasons some people do not like the change. These people will not like the reforms to go through as smoothly as we want these to. I cannot blame them. But in spite of their efforts to the contrary we have to make headway because with the package like this if we do not achieve results, people will start questioning the utility of the reforms.

DUA : Mr. Prime Minister, you have inherited two serious problems. One is Punjab and the other is Kashmir. Somehow, the country has not been able to find solutions to these problems which have virtually become chronic. The people are feeling concerned over the inability of the government—or of the country—to solve these problems which have a bearing on the stability and unity of the nation. How do you look at this?

PM : I thought I had inherited several other problems also. I inherited the economy in a shambles. I inherited the society that was almost breaking up. I inherited a pretty bad situation in Assam. I inherited similar other problems in many other parts of the country and I inherited the Punjab and Kashmir problems. Now it is a matter for anyone to look back and decide for himself what has happened during the last one year. And what has been attempted in the case of Punjab and Kashmir. In Punjab, we wanted elections. I wanted a State Government. I did not say the Congress Government should come to power although as Congress President I should say that. I thought it is not one party but all together can solve the problem of the State. Some parties kept out and some parties came in. A Government was formed—incidentally, a Congress Government. I wanted it to settle down and come to grips with the problems.

Nevertheless, hardly a week elapses when we do not have some kind of in depth examination of some of the problems in Punjab. We have not yet come to a stage where we could announce anything because the announcement itself is a complex matter in a situation like this. I can assure you that we are seized of the problems and we are examining them along with the State Government.

How soon we can come out with a solution or a series of solutions it is not possible to say right now in this interview. But I hope it will be possible for us to say what we are going to do sooner than later.

DUA : Is the Punjab problem being looked at purely from a law and order point of view or the political aspects of the Punjab issue also being considered?

PM : All these aspects and all the issues involved, plus the aspects of attempts to fuel terrorism from across the border are looked into. Right now I could not say anything more because some time it happens that once people come to know what exactly is being done then all kinds of forces are let loose. So I will come out with a statement at a proper time. I am prepared for it.

DUA : I hope you are referring to the Punjab package?

PM : You can call it a package, call it a dispensation, you may call it series of solutions or whatever you may call it. I am not bothered about the labels.

DUA : You will have talks with different people on Chandigarh, the water question or....

PM : We will have talks with lots of people there, different sections of the people. That process to some extent is on. It has not been intensified but it is on. I think we should leave Punjab at that.

DUA : The people are also feeling concerned over the Government not solving the Kashmir question.

PM : Here again what exactly is the solution or what exactly is the problem in Kashmir. The problem is that from across the border there are elements coming into the Valley creating conditions of unrest and creating a sort of secessionist attitude. We have to combat this. The means of terrorism, means of violence also we have to combat. Pakistan continues to fuel the problem and we have to go on tackling it. So, when we talk of the Kashmir problem this is one.

The other aspect is that Kashmir has been under President's rule for a long time. We don't like that. The moment conditions within the State permit the emergence of a democratic set up, we would like that to happen. Again, I am convinced that a representative government elected by the people of the State is necessary for solving the real problems of the State. Here again there has been some controversy whether we could talk of elections at all in Kashmir under the present circumstances. Or I should have elections right now. I am afraid I do not agree with either of these views. We must have a representative government there. But before that we must have conditions conducive to emergence of a representative government. So on both counts I think my mind is clear.

So, again it a matter of tackling the international situation so as to make it conducive to the emergence of a popular government. And then once government is installed there, the people's problems should be attended to by it.

The third aspect is to persuade Pakistan to desist from what it is doing now in the State.

DUA : Elections in Kashmir? The State Governor has said in a statement recently that the present is not the right time to go in for elections. Do you agree with his assessment or....?

PM : What do you mean by "present"? When you say "present" what you are saying is that we cannot have elections tomorrow. I would say don't stretch it too much because ultimately any prolongation of President's rule beyond a point becomes counter-productive. Even if there is a little risk we may have to take, it is better to go in for elections.

DUA : Do you envisage talks with some sections of the people in Kashmir before the elections?

PM : Again it is the same process. The point is we will never be able to bring those conditions which are today for a democratic takeover or changeover, unless the people are taken into confidence. Now who are to be taken into confidence is a matter of detail. We have to think of persons who are like-minded, who want to listen, who want a popular government and who want to work within the Indian Constitution. We have to talk to such people and I am sure that will be the methodology and that methodology, ultimately coupled with effective steps to stop violence and yield results.

DUA : But the talks that may take place whenever and with whomsoever—and I can see you are trying to have some flexibility on that—will have to take place under the framework of the Indian Constitution? Is Article 370 negotiable....?

PM : Well, we have to decide on those things when we have really come to grip with certain issues while talking to them. Now, what else they would like within the Indian Constitution; what else we would find feasible within the Indian Constitution. It is a matter which has to be gone into, because there are parties in the country which don't want Article 370 at all. But we don't agree with that view and we have expressed ourselves openly on that. These details will have to be attended to when actually we come up with these points during the talks or during our own examination of what is feasible.

DUA : I can see three broad currents of thought on the Kashmir question. One is the view which the militants take, that there should be total Azadi for Kashmir. The second seeks dilution of Article

370 and a new arrangement for autonomy for Kashmir within the Indian Constitution. And the third—as you have mentioned—is that some parties, like the BJP, want scrapping of Article 370.

PM : Within the Indian Constitution, there are so many views as you can see. Outside the Indian Constitution, that is something which we don't want to look at. So, when someone calls it Azadi and means that he doesn't want the Indian Constitution to operate, then we have no common ground. If he thinks that within the Indian Constitution an amount of autonomy which meets with their aspirations is possible, then that is what we have to explore.

So, it is within that area that all these differing opinions are possible, starting from one extreme opinion that Article 370 itself should be scrapped all the way to another opinion which seeks more powers for the State etc. etc. So, you can see that it is a very wide area and within that wide area whatever we consider feasible and whatever is considered good for the state, that would have to be determined. And that can be only after the long, thorough and deep examination.

DUA : Is Kashmir the problem between India and the people of Kashmir or, as Pakistan has been making noises about Kashmir internally as well at various world fora, that they are a party to the dispute and they would like to sort out the problem with you and decide its fate? I would like to know your view on this.

PM : I am not sure how an intruder can become a party. That should answer your question.

DUA : Non-negotiable with Pakistan. But with the people of Kashmir you would like to...?

PM : With the people of Kashmir it is an internal problem. We can settle with them whatever we consider feasible.

DUA : Mr. Narasimha Rao, I would like to now explore your mind on the health of the Congress Party. You had problem after the last elections with a chunk of the Congress Parliamentary Party elected from the South because the performance of the party in the North was not as it ought to have been from your point of view. Now, how are you going to retrieve the ground lost in the North for the Congress? You know it is crucial for the party if it has to rule the country for some time?

PM : I do not think so, Mr Dua. After so many elections it should be quite clear to anyone that electoral fortunes have nothing to do with the strength of the party in a particular part of the country. We have lost elections; we have won elections. There have been swings one way, swings the other. But the Congress party's base which happens to be all over the country, has not weakened.

I am fully convinced that in the North, the Congress has a very strong base. Sometimes, there are internal reasons; sometimes emotional reasons; sometimes organisational reasons. Now, there could be any number of reasons because of which the Congress wins or doesn't win an election—whether it is in the North or the South. We have seen in all States, the fortunes of the Congress fluctuating from time to time.

Today we are faced with the problem of reorganising the Congress from the grass roots level. This job was to be done early. Mr Rajiv Gandhi wanted to do it. He had started something about it but for various reasons elections could not be held. And elections were the first step to reorganise. Without elections it is not possible to reorganise the Congress because anyone at any level has no legitimacy. By nominating him to be the president of PCC or some other committee I don't make him the legitimate. Now the time has come to reorganise the Congress. But it takes time because after 20 years of functioning in a particular style or way, the U-turn is not easy to achieve. But we will achieve it and I would like to place the Congress back on a democratic footing with a democratic functioning and a democratic temper. This is my task. In this, I am also facing problems and this is a longer route. But I am preferring the longer route.

DUA : But you have nominated a larger number of PCC presidents during the last few weeks?

PM : No. That was because... you see, this is what I am saying, this is the legacy of the past. We asked them to elect, they refused to elect. The reason is simple—they don't want to take the responsibility. There are groups, there are other sections and so on and when they come to election, the tendency is to take election as something like a warfare. So, they don't want to get into that, they want some elderly person sitting in Delhi to say, "All right this man will be the president", and everybody will agree. Now, I don't like this at all.

So, some kind of balance had to be struck. From the next election onwards no one is going to take a chance like this. There is going to be continuous enrolment of members, they will fight for their rights, they will fight for their members to be brought to polling booth etc. etc. So they are going to be very regular elections for which we are setting up the machinery from now on. So from the next elections, I do not have any difficulty. But I have taken care to consult people, a long process of consultation was undertaken and only then nominations have been made. So if it is not an election, it is not just a nomination, it is something in between.

DUA : Mr Congress president, the controversy has arisen about the elections to the Congress Working Committee at Tirupati. Two points have emerged. One, that some sort of a syndicate had emerged at Tirupati before the elections to win a large number in the CWC. And two, the controversy arose when you moved two prominent members—who were elected—to move to the nominated quota.

PM : No, there was no syndicate which appeared either at Tirupati or later. You see, it all happened in a very unintended manner. We have a kind of election, a mode of election which gives ten votes to each voter. And there are ten persons to be elected. It will be just like a double member constituency. It so happened that in many cases both Scheduled Caste candidates were elected and both general candidates were defeated. It happens like this. So where the contest is very close a few thousand votes this side or that side will make a difference. Here it was a question of ten.

So, there was no syndicate as such but there could be understandings. A leader from State "A" would say I will get my votes to you, you get your votes to me. This kind of understanding is possible and we know it is possible. It is done. Generally elections took place like this. A leader from Andhra Pradesh said yes, I have got 40 people, fifty people. You have got 100 people, both of us get elected. Let us make 150 each. Nothing is wrong in that. This time what happened is that while nine or 10 persons would have been taken in one panel, some were missed out, and they happened to be Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. And this is not good for the Congress. This is again unintended. Nobody wanted the Scheduled Caste candidates to be kept out but the method of election itself, and the pressure of election resulted in that. As the Congress president, I was under obligation to tell the AICC that this is not good. I did it at the earliest opportunity immediately after the results were announced. At the same time, I could not show any disrespect to the AICC in the sense that if they have elected their wisdom X, Y, Z; I say you go home and I will put some other person in his job, in his place. This I could not. Therefore, the only course available to me was to make use of my power of nomination in such a way that I create two vacancies for the elections. At the same time, I respect the decision of the AICC by giving two from my quota of nomination to the persons who are being replaced. They are in the Working Committee and they are such prominent people that they would have been in the CWC even if they had not contested. If I had put some people who were not so prominent, then my justification for nominating would have been under question.

DUA : You could have straightaway nominated Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe candidates in your list.

PM : Out of ten, I lose five or six for general secretaries. Also, there is a treasurer. Those ten are actually not ten. Only two or three remain out of which two I have still kept open. I have to appoint another general secretary. He will be a member of the Working Committee. So my choice is not as bad as you think. I have already used the two. These important leaders I do not mind. I have to ask myself suppose they are not contestant, would I or would I not have nominated them. The answer is yes, so I did it.

DUA : Has groupism emerged in the Congress party at the central level?

PM : No, there is no groupism. I genuinely believe there is no groupism and this I am not just telling for the sake of the record.

DUA : Mr Prime Minister, I would like to ask the question that is in everybody's mind these days—Who is to be the President of the country? The elections are next month and I believe you are making efforts to evolve a consensus among various parties. How far you have succeeded so far in evolving consensus on the next President?

PM : I have succeeded to the extent of getting some kind of endorsement or approval of the method of consensus. This is all we have been able to achieve and I cannot, I say, I should have attempted for more because I have to decide in my party first. What I have achieved so far is that the other parties are in favour of a consensus candidate. Who that candidate is to be; it has to be decided by the ruling party. I have succeeded part of the way. Now, I have to continue consultations and again I will be back to the other parties.

DUA : You mean in the ruling party there is unanimity on who the next President should be?

PM : There can be many opinions but then ultimately the ruling party will choose one and there will be unanimity in the party.

DUA : On both the President and the Vice-President?

PM : I have no problem within the ruling party.

DUA : Any problem with the other parties?

PM : I don't think so. But I will have to, I mean I really cannot speak categorically about other parties. I only say that I am hopeful.

DUA : A new controversy has arisen and Mr V. P. Singh has made a statement that he will resign from the Lok Sabha if a Scheduled Caste or Tribe candidate is not chosen for presidentship.

PM : It is not proper for me to say anything on this.

DUA : Any criteria being followed for the selection of the next presidential nomination on which a consensus is sought to be brought about?

PM : Criteria have always been there but they have never been put on paper or spelt out. Once you start doing that you get into trouble. It is better not to spell out the criteria because all of us understand.

DUA : Mr. Prime Minister, public is, as you know, seriously concerned about the banks scandal the country is witnessing these days. Thousands of crores of rupees have got drained away, the Janakiraman report itself says over Rs 3,000 crore in the first interim report and more may come out. This figure itself is staggering. What is the Government doing at this stage to tackle the scandal as well as assure the public that their money is safe?

PM : We have been taking a very tough stand. In this matter we are absolutely clear in our mind that anyone who is at fault, who has done this will have to pay for his deeds. The legal process is on in right earnest. Under the new ordinance a custodian has been appointed and rules will be framed. The CBI has already listed and chargesheeted people.

In the next two-three days we will review the situation in the Cabinet Committee of Political Affairs and it will decide what further action is needed. I have no doubt that there will be no cover-up, no shielding of anybody. Law will take its own course and at speed. It would not be a slow course; it will be a speedy course, as speedy as we can make it. That assurance I can give.

DUA : You are now going to seize assets of people who made money out of the scam. But there are senior bank officials who have been told to go out of the job so—is that all the punishment that is going to be given to the bank officials who have colluded with Harshad Mehta and unscrupulous brokers? I don't think it is sufficient punishment from the public's point of view.

PM : Yes. We ask them to go out (bank officials) as a prelude to see that evidence etc is not tampered with. The idea is that they should not be there to influence the investigation. I think this is a very important step.

DUA : You think the public confidence in the Indian banking system can be restored?

PM : I think public confidence will remain in the Indian banking system. It is not a question of restoration but the question of people's understanding that in spite of this, the Indian banking system has been working well.

There have been some cases of omission and commission on the part of some people. In fact, confidence in the system will be doubled if the people see that adequate punishment is meted out to these people. It is one way of restoring confidence, strengthening the confidence.

DUA : You were mentioning a little earlier that economic reform was one of your major concerns. You have come out with a package of measures soon after you took over and in the last budget. Are you likely to press ahead with these reforms, despite the hurdles you were hinting at?

PM : Yes, absolutely. In fact the hurdles are becoming less and less as we go along and our determination becomes manifest to go on with the reforms. In the initial stages there were some people who thought that maybe we will give up, but we are determined to go ahead. We are not going to slow down on the economic front.

DUA : There were some problems about evolving an EXIT policy in the beginning. Has the Government worked out an EXIT policy acceptable to the unions?

PM : We have by and large, succeeded in convincing the labour unions and everyone concerned that whenever there is a sickness in an industry some way has to be found out to bring it back to health without causing distress to the workers. Now both these aspects are being taken care of and the tripartite discussions going on.

DUA : Mr Prime Minister, I would like to know your views on some issues concerning foreign policy. Why is it that as a country or as a Government, India was slow in anticipating the changes in the Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union?

PM : I don't think so. In fact, we had anticipated all these things. If you see Rajiv Gandhi's speech in Belgrade as far back as in 1989, you will find that his analysis of what was to come was not very different from what actually happened. In details there could always be difference on whether Gorbachov would continue for so many years or not continue for so many years, or whether their system would continue or not continue. These are the things which no one can foretell. But the trend that was developing was very clearly seen.

DUA : You are to meet President Boris Yeltsin in the near future....

PM : Well, he is expected to come here. I don't think dates have been fixed. But I met his Personal Envoy, Mr Burbulis, who came here recently and we had very detailed talks with him. But President

Yeltsin, we have left it to him to choose the time for his visit. Evidently, he is in the midst of difficult problems within the country and abroad, so naturally as our guest he should have the choice of the timing. I am looking forward to meeting him when he comes here.

DUA : Obviously the kind of relationship India had with the former Soviet Union cannot be there between India and Russia now.

PM : That is possible. We are having the same kind of relationship, except to the extent of changes that have come. You cannot wish away some changes and to that extent the relationship would have to undergo certain modifications. On the whole in spirit and in the approach to each other, there has been no change.

DUA : But there is an impression that while the basis of the foreign policy have not been changed, a tilt has developed during the last few months towards the United States. We hear about strategic partnership between India and United States. What do we really mean by it? Also there is talk of co-operation in the defence sphere between India and the U.S.

PM : That has been there for a long time. I thought we had co-operation in defence field with many countries. We had with France, with Germany, with so many other countries including the former Soviet Union. In the case of the Soviet Union, it was much more, quantitatively, because of the terms and conditions etc. and our own situation. There is nothing new. Yes, the US finds that having closer relationship, closer interaction with us in the defence field is good for both sides. We also feel so. In fact, the first talks with the US Defence Secretary was conducted by me when I was the Defence Minister in Rajivji's cabinet in 1985, as far back as that. So, this has been going on. This is an ongoing process. I don't think there is anything very new now. But while circumstances change, while the world situation changes, these relations could become closer for various reasons. Otherwise, I think it is an ongoing process.

DUA : But we could not think of naval exercises some years ago between India and the United States, but now it seems, we can.

PM : We had. We had given them some facilities in those days which were objected to but we thought there was nothing wrong in that. Now, today if we stand to gain by a joint exercise and our experts, our Navy thinks so, I don't see why not. So, these are all things which are judged on the basis of mutual benefit.

DUA : Mr Prime Minister, I was asking about the tilts earlier, but is India under pressure from the United States on the question of

Non-Proliferation Treaty or some sort of a Non-Proliferation regime for South Asia....?

PM : Well, you may recall that when the Soviet Union was there, we were under equal pressure from the Soviet Union. This was one point on which both super powers had more or less agreed—styles may be different but their attempt was the same. We did not succumb. We had our own view on the matter. We still believe that matters of nuclear non-proliferation have to be decided on a global basis. I have made it very clear. It is inconceivable that we can solve it on the basis of one or two countries. It is not a question of India or Pakistan making any nuclear weapons; one or two countries, making a few weapons; it is a question of thousands of weapons already made, stockpiled by other countries and the danger of their finding their way elsewhere. That is what they have to really worry about and that is why only a global approach will solve this. We do not think that a piecemeal approach or an approach in regard to one or two countries or a small region will ever have any impact on the whole situation.

We are trying to convince the US on this. We are having talks with them. I had told President Bush that five countries including the Russian Republic sitting around a table is not going to solve it because we will be only stating our positions. Nothing will come out.

I had said I am prepared to talk. That is how we agreed for a dialogue and when Foreign Secretary J. N. Dixit went to the US some dialogue on this took place.

DUA : That means we are continuing to oppose the signing of the NPT. Do I take it as a statement?

PM : Well, We haven't signed it, we have told them that our approach is totally different.

DUA : What about the Government's stand on this proposal for a five-nation conference?

PM : That is what I am saying. About this I told him (President Bush). When I met him I told him that this is not going to be really of any use because: One, they talked about the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union is no longer there. That has made all the difference. And the other is that we will be only repeating our stands. You see India and Pakistan and everybody sitting around a table, nothing will come out. Three, in principle—and most important—we consider this a global problem and therefore it should be tackled globally.

DUA : Is India under a pressure from the United States on the question of development of our missiles? There has been

pressure on the supply of a rocket engine from Russia to India.

Well, you can call it by a particular name doesn't really mean any change, any difference. We have a research and development programme which we do not consider as objectionable. I made a statement in Parliament earlier bringing out the relevant facts, namely, that the same engine was offered by the US, by France and by Russia. Now, out of the three, we made a choice and there is no reason suddenly for any of the other two to think that it has become illegal by our not accepting their offer. Maybe they might have passed a law, this is possible. Later on, there was a law passed by them which perhaps makes it objectionable if they think so. Now, the same thing happened in the case of Tarapur, they passed a subsequent law but they couldn't just ram it down our throats because we were not ready for that. We said we will insist on the contract and they agreed, which was entered into before you passed your law. So they did find a way, they understood our point.

DUA : They found a French route for it.

PM : In the same way, suddenly they have passed a law, this has become objectionable. I mean it may lie for the future, I really don't know what law they have passed and how they look at it . But what was not considered objectionable, a weapons programme or a part of the weapons programme, potential for a weapons programme, cannot suddenly be called objectionable.

DUA : But are Washington's reasons in your view commercial or basically they don't want us to develop our missiles?

PM : Well, I think there is a general disinclination to allow anyone else developing it. So, that is how it is. We say we can't be choosy in these matters. If there is to be no development, there should be no development anywhere. If there has to be disarmament, there should be total disarmament. This is what we have been standing for. So, there is nothing very new in this. We have some capability; the engine is to be developed. We can develop it, our scientists have said it. It is a question of time. I have also said it in my statement. So, I think we should take all these things in our stride.

DUA : Do they want us to go slow on Agni?

PM : I don't think they have said so. Atleast I don't recall either we have been told that we should do this or not do that. The point is that they consider this programme as a Dual Use Technology which can be used for weapons purposes and so on. That way I can cite a number of examples which can be used as dual use but you don't stop using them for the peaceful purpose for which you want them. So, on the whole instead of really getting into an

acrimonious debate, we should take it in our stride and take our own decisions.

DUA : Mr Prime Minister, some time back earlier in an interview you were mentioning in the context of Punjab and Kashmir that there is a dimension that Pakistan is trying to encourage secessionist elements and you said you would like to persuade Pakistan to stop interfering in our internal affairs. Now, are you really hopeful that you will be able to persuade Pakistan. After all, a number of attempts have been made earlier to persuade Pakistan not to do a few things, but....

PM : But I don't want to give up. We are neighbours. Neighbours should never give up the effort to improve their relations regardless of how much success you achieve at a given moment. And we know that there are forces who perhaps do not want us to succeed. This is one thing which both of us have to understand .

DUA : You are going to meet Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in Rio next week.

PM : I think so. They had arranged something. Now it is to be changed because the timings of the conference have changed and I am told that they are rescheduling it.

DUA : But if the meeting takes place, are you going to take up the questions of Punjab and Kashmir terrorism....?

PM : Naturally, we have so many things to talk about and you can't have a talk with the Prime Minister of Pakistan without taking up Punjab and Kashmir.

DUA : Thank you very much, Mr Prime Minister. I find the time is over.

PM : Thank You.

New International Order

I AM GRATEFUL to the National Press Club of Japan for giving me this opportunity to meet you and to reach out through you to the people of Japan.

This is the third day of my visit. During this visit I have had an audience with His Majesty the Emperor. I have met Prime Minister, His Excellency Mr. Miyazawa and other senior leaders and had wide ranging talks with them. I had discussions with a number of leading industrialists and scientists. The visit so far has been very fruitful and, I am confident, will open a new chapter of a more intensive and active co-operation between India and Japan for our mutual benefit. As you know, this is the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between us.

India and Japan are two great civilisations which share close historical and cultural ties. In the period after the Second World War, we have built a fund of goodwill and friendship. The new challenges in today's rapidly changing world offer fresh opportunities for Asia's two large democracies—India and Japan—to work together for our cherished values in the international arena.

The Government of Japan is India's largest bilateral donor and has always been supportive of our developmental effects. We greatly appreciate Japan's assistance.

After our talks we both agreed that the relations between these two ancient democracies should be still wider and deeper. On the economic side, in addition to ODA, I look forward to much more Japanese direct investment in India. With this, bilateral trade will also expand both ways. The Japanese Prime Minister himself has confirmed to me that Japanese business interest in India had now increased as a result of our new economic liberalisation measures.

Besides economic co-operation, our talks covered such wide subjects as North-South harmony rather than confrontation, democratisation of the United Nations system, and cultivation of good relations with neighbours.

On the bilateral side we are happy that their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Akishino will be visiting India during the course of this year when we are celebrating the fortieth anniversary of our Treaty of Friendship and Peace. In addition we will have a visit by the Speaker Mr. Sakurauchi who is the president of the Indo-Japanese Association.

These are times of hope and promise and I am optimistic of a bright future for our bilateral relations

Question-Answer Session

QUESTION : Sir, in a recent interview with Iomiuri Shimbun newspaper, you did not mention much about your signing the NPT whereas China has made its intent clear to commit themselves to the NPT.

Then there is another issue. Although the United Nations is now coming to the forefront in resolving many international issues, yet one of the oldest questions is still pending—the Kashmir issue between Pakistan and India. Could you give your views on these questions?

PRIME MINISTER : Gentlemen, the question of non-proliferation is not new nor is it being addressed to me for the first time.

India is very particular about nuclear non-proliferation, not only about non-proliferation but India is very keen, and is insistent that there should be no nuclear weapons anywhere on the face of the earth. So, the question put to me is rather limited while I am answering the question in its most comprehensive dimension.

India is against the existence of any nuclear weapon, any weapon of mass destruction, anywhere. But the fact remains that these weapons are available today. They are in the possession of some countries. There are some countries which you can call the second category which do possess the capacity to produce weapons but have not chosen to do so. But the capacity is there and they could become nuclear weapon countries if they chose to. There are of course the third category of countries which do not possess either the capacity of producing nuclear weapons or nuclear weapons themselves. But the fact also remains that if there is a nuclear holocaust, their people stand to suffer as much as the people of any other country. So, when a weapon of mass destruction is unleashed, there is no distinction as to who will suffer and who will be spared. No one will be spared and that is why they are called weapons of mass destruction.

Now, the only logical solution to this complex situation could be that those states which happen to be nuclear weapon states should agree that they will dismantle all the nuclear weapons in their possession within a specified time; those states which are called the threshold states, have the capability of becoming nuclear weapon states but have not become or they may be in the process of becoming nuclear weapons states, they give an undertaking that they will not cross the threshold, then there could be a ban on the testing of these weapons, there could be a ban on the manufacture of the material—the fissionable material—which is used in making

these weapons and at the end of that stipulated period it is ensured that there is no nuclear weapon anywhere in the world. This is the only logical solution to the situation today.

There is a Treaty. The Treaty I think was drawn up in 1970, about 22 years ago. Since then some countries have taken the stand that the Treaty really does not aim at total and complete nuclear disarmament. It is discriminatory. It seeks to leave some states with nuclear weapons in their possession and it only asks the other states not to go nuclear. So, this is discriminatory.

Incidentally, Japan also happens to hold the same view. Even while signing the NPT they have said this in no uncertain terms. India happens to hold the same view. The only difference is: they have signed it, we have not signed it. That may be because of our own reasons. But the fact remains that the logic is the same, the result is the same and we are more or less of the same view.

The last part of my presentation is: where do we stand today? We are just about two to three years from the time when this NPT is to be reviewed. There has to be a review in 1995. The preparation for the review would naturally start within the next one year or so. So, the focal thing for all countries, all interested countries would be to start discussing about how the review should be made and if the review is to be made, what are the modifications to be made. In spite of the NPT, nuclear proliferation has not stopped. Evidently there are loopholes in the Treaty. Evidently there are some imperfections in the entire programme of the NPT. So, we should be thinking of correcting those things and making the Treaty absolutely failsafe hereafter and also capable of enabling the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons at the end of a stipulated period. Now, on these lines, the Treaty needs to be reviewed. It is that we have to discuss now, not whether a country is going to sign it or not. This is not the time for signing. This is the time for reviewing. So, this is what we think should be considered now; and, between nations, between Governments interested in the subject, this is the discussion that should be initiated.

QUESTION : I would like to ask two questions. My first question is related to the economic reforms as promoted by your government over the last one year. We understand that your government is promoting liberalisation of the Indian economy and I would like to first of all know from your Excellency what are the achievements so far of the reform process. What are the problems that have been identified and also, if you could be kind enough to share with us, what may be the future outlook of the reform?

My second question is as follows. Amongst the students and researchers on India in Japan, there has been much interest and discussion into who has been the original architect of the liberalisation programme which is now proceeded with in India. Who was the architect and when was it originated? One theory that is held here is that the programme was actually initiated or planned in the early 80s under the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Would you be kind enough to share with us your views on this question?

PRIME MINISTER : Yes. Taking the second question first, it is true that the first steps for liberalisation were conceptualised and some of them taken in the early 80s under Indira Gandhi. In Rajiv Gandhi's regime, these steps were intensified to some extent. So, the trend was set in the early 80s and was continued later.

What has happened during the last one year is that we had to take a whole lot of measures, more or less all at once simultaneously and within a very short period. It was because of the fact that we had to meet a particular situation, a situation which was not there facing either Indira Gandhi or Rajiv Gandhi. I faced a situation wherein it became necessary for the whole package of the reforms to be rushed through, to be passed within a very short time and that is why the viability of the reforms, the magnitude of the reforms as undertaken during the last one year seems to be much more than before.

In short, the steps which have been taken this year *inter alia* were deregulation, delicensing, dismantling of all the institutional framework meant for regulation, licensing, making it possible for foreign investors to come and invest to a larger extent, to a higher extent than before, going upto 51 per cent or even further and all the consequential measures that were needed to make this easy. I do not claim that all that needs to be done has been done but a major portion has been completed.

Mr. Ishikawa came with a large group of industrialists sometime in January. In his report he has given some suggestions. I understand that most of the suggestions have been carried out. This is a continuous process and whenever we find any hitch anywhere, we would like to take early steps to remove those hitches. The thing to be noted is that the process has been started in a big way. It is not going to be reversed because it has the general support of the people of India and we are going ahead with it.

QUESTIONS : Sir, the Cold War is now over and the former Soviet Union has been disintegrated. A new world order seems to be now being constructed. On the other hand in Japan there has been much

discussion going on as to the participation in the peace keeping operations of United Nations and also that Japan is making much offensive in her foreign relations or in diplomatic arena. Now from the standpoint of traditional powers like China, Indonesia and India, I would like to hear your assessment and view as to the Japanese efforts in the international arena over what the Japan is trying to do at the moment in the external relations field?

PRIME MINISTER : Well, the Cold War is over and as a result, the United Nations Organisation, the United Nations Secretary General, has had to undertake many tasks of peacekeeping and bringing about peace, for trying to prevent conflicts breaking out and wherever they breakout, for trying to bring them to an end as quickly as possible. Now, this needs co-operation from all countries. India is one of the countries which pledged full support to the efforts of the Secretary General of the United Nations and wherever he wanted India's help, we have been unreservedly giving it.

Now, for Japan to expand its activity in the present context is essentially, according to me, a national decision, a decision which the Government of Japan and the people of Japan have chosen to take. Now, it is not for me to make any comment on Japan at this stage on this particular decision. I would not like to comment anything beyond that.

I would like to add, however, that in the making of the new international order all countries, all governments have a right to take part in whatever manner they think they can. That applies to Japan as well.

QUESTION : (English translation of the question asked in Japanese not recorded.)

PRIME MINISTER : Yes, I remember one of your questions. It has been more or less axed by him but I will take it up.

Well, you wanted to know something about the Kashmir questions pending before the UN. The short answer is that we do not consider Kashmir as an open question any more. It is closed and closed for ever. Kashmir is an integral part of India and that will be the position.

QUESTION : Sir, you said that you look forward to more direct Japanese investments in India. Could you be a little more specific in what areas of industry would you like to see more Japanese and foreign investments in your country? What is your general policy for foreign investments in your country?

If I may ask just an added question—More and more people around the world, particularly in the United States, are talking about

a New World Order. What is your attitude, what is your approach, what is your interpretation of this so-called New World Order and how do you see this New World Order to develop in the coming decade?

PRIME MINISTER : Well, taking your first question, foreign investment in India in the first place would be welcome in augmenting the infrastructural capacity of the country. As you know, we are embarking on a very ambitious programme of industrialisation and that would need as a condition precedent a very substantial increase of the infrastructural facilities like power, roads and several other things which we understand by infrastructure. I have told industrialists that this would be a priority area for us. But that does not bar other areas—for instance, computer software, and I cannot exactly tell you what priority is to be given but it is an area of priority these days where the capability of the Indian engineers also is acknowledged throughout the world. Therefore, that also comes within the areas in which we are interested.

We have not given an exhaustive list of all that we would welcome. But generally my emphasis has been on infrastructure plus other industries that would be of general utility to the country and when we go into a particular industry we could always decide what is to be decided about. We could discuss and decide what kind of priority is to be given to that. But generally investment is welcome. There are industries where only processing is done in India. There are one kind of refinery areas where the crude can come from some other country and go back to the other country; we might use part of it. This also has been considered and discussed with many industrialists abroad. So, there could be many variations but I have given you the broad priorities that we have.

(About the New International Order) I will very quickly and briefly put it as an Order in which there is democratisation of political decisions, there is equity in all economic activity so that the difference between the North and the South is minimised and we do not have two sets of nations—one rich and the other poor. Environmentally we should ensure safety and the general trend should be of co-operation and not of confrontation. These are the four point among many others that could be elaborated. These four points, I think, are essential for the New International Order.

Impact of New Policy Initiatives

I AM HAPPY to be amidst you today. I have been in touch with the friends of the Press off and on, but a full conference was perhaps due. Since the Prime Minister is judged from day to day, the lapse of one year is perhaps of no special significance in the continuous process of appraisal. Even so, I am grateful for the many evaluations recently made in the media at the conclusion of the first year of this government in office.

All of us, normally, have one common experience. When one is in a crisis, its daunting nature is fully realised. But, when it is over, its seriousness is forgotten or largely underplayed. One hardly remembers what one went through in an event. It is good to know that the worst is behind us even if the *pandits* continue to point out that the future too is not going to be easy by any means. I appreciate this warning also and I would like to assure you that I will never underestimate the challenges that any self-respecting nation is bound to face in its struggle to uphold its principles and to stick to its convictions.

India is destined to walk on the razor's edge for ever and ever. We have passed through a year full of problems. It has also been a year of change and hope. The circumstances under which this Government was formed last year are well known. We were facing a grave financial situation as well as an extremely testing time for the nation's social cohesion and harmony.

In the past twelve months, the nation's morale and confidence have been largely restored. Yet there is no denying the fact that we still have a long way to go.

On the economic front, we set before ourselves two principal objectives : The first one was to avert a default situation and to save the *izzat* of the nation. The second objective was to attend to some of the basic maladies inherent in the economy and to free it from various serious inhibiting factors. It was also high time to integrate it with the world economy. Therefore, the process of decontrol and deregulation was implemented during the year in all but a few sensitive areas. Government has had consultations on this with political parties, opinion-makers and representatives of trade, commerce and labour. The changes effected aim at increasing

production, exports, people's income, and generating jobs. In a sense, the entire policy package is directed towards making the economy strong, vibrant and people-oriented. As a result of the policy changes, our foreign exchange reserves have now reached a level of about Rs. 15,000 crores, which will enable us to keep the wheels of industry moving. Non-resident Indians renewed their confidence in our economy by investing Rs. 6,400 crores in India Development Bonds and other schemes. An indication of the initial impact of the measures initiated is available in terms of foreign investment approvals between August 1991 and May 1992. The amount of foreign investment approved was nearly 12 times the investment approved in a similar period of the previous year.

I do not want to go into various facts and figures since I am addressing a gathering of well-informed media persons, and you can judge for yourselves the impact of these policies. I would like to reiterate that restructuring the economy will not be at the cost of our labour and the work force. As a matter of fact, the main thrust of the economic reforms is to ensure that there is no basic sickness in our industry which affects the workers and their families. Public Sector enterprises will have a role where they are needed most. Our effort is to make the Public Sector viable, profitable and accountable to people. While reshaping it, the Government would safeguard the interests of the labour. The setting up of the National Renewal Fund for retraining and rehabilitation of workers is a step in this direction. We are constantly engaged in extensive dialogue with the various labour organisations on this issue.

As I mentioned before, we have to restart the planning process, especially the process which attends to the development of human resource, infrastructure and poverty alleviation. After a gap of year or so, the Eighth Plan has begun with its central theme of generating jobs and income resource. With this in view, we have stepped up the outlay on agriculture, rural development, and irrigation. The Eighth Plan envisages a doubling of outlay as compared to the Seventh Plan. This is being attempted in spite of a severe resource crunch we are going through for the time being. We are convinced that the Indian economy will grow strong only in a free environment wherein competition coexists with co-operation. The policy decisions are meant for this purpose and, therefore, will be pursued. Economic offences and irregularities will be dealt with a firm hand, and all relevant rules and regulations will be enforced strictly. In such matters, no one found guilty of manipulating or indulging in financial irregularities will be spared.

On the foreign policy front, India has been quite alert to the changing global scene. In the conduct of our foreign policy,

non-alignment continues to be our beacon. Its relevance has been greatly enhanced in the new context in which independence of decision-making is very important. India once again is striving to ensure that the aspirations of the Developing World find expression in the various international fora.

Promoting economic and commercial interests of India abroad has become a key concern of our diplomacy. During my visits to various countries, I have given primacy to this aspect. Just to touch on recent developments in the conduct of our external relations, we have upgraded our diplomatic ties with Israel. India has also been invited to take part in the Middle-East peace talks. We have established close relations with some of the Republics of the erstwhile Soviet Union, having recognised all of them.

Our relations with the United States have vastly improved, despite the differences on certain issues. Our keenness to maintain cordial relations with our neighbours has been receiving response. However, our experience with Pakistan in this regard continues to be disappointing.

As you all know, recently I had an occasion to meet the Prime Minister of Pakistan at Rio De Janeiro in which I expressed our great concern over Pakistan's support to extremist activities in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. We hope that Pakistan changes its way and paves the way for good-neighbourly relations.

On the home front, the social fabric was being torn apart and the traditional social harmony had been greatly disturbed. There were very serious problems of law and order, besides the grave situation in Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir and Assam. The situation had given rise to doubts about the stability and integrity of the country. We are in a better situation today.

Some of the political and other steps taken have radically altered the situation in Assam. In Punjab, a popular Government has been formed and the situation is reasonably under control. In Jammu and Kashmir, while the foreign-instigated secessionist movement continues to pose a challenge, the situation is now far better. This has given encouragement to us to consider restoring the political process at an appropriate time. We believe that we have set in motion the right policies to deal with these great problems. I would like to assure the country that they are receiving the Government's full attention, with a view to finding lasting solutions.

During the past one year, I can say with modesty, that the Government has prepared a good ground for resolving some of the basic ills in the economic and political system. In some areas, we

have come forward with drastic measures which have begun to yield results. Several other problems remain to be solved, but we have already begun to address them with policy initiatives.

Lastly, if our Government has been successful in overcoming some of the immediate problems, it was possible only because of the generous support extended to the Government by the people. I salute their grit and determination. I can discharge my debt to the people only by rededicating myself and the Government to the tasks ahead.

I should also say that I have been singularly fortunate in getting unprecedented support and, in fact, support of a kind which I had not even expected, from the media. I have not been meeting you very often. Off and on, whenever I met you, on the whole, you were very co-operative. I have to place on record my deep appreciation and gratitude for the co-operation you have given me.

QUESTION : (In Hindi) Mr. Prime Minister, you are getting co-operation from all sections because of your clean political image.

PRIME MINISTER : (In Hindi) I am not able to hear you. You please keep the mike at some distance. Perhaps you are keeping it too near.

QUESTION : (In Hindi) No, I am not keeping it so near. I was just admiring you, perhaps that is why you could not hear me. It is because of your good political image that you are getting co-operation from all sections. However, recently an opinion is being formed that there is divergent thinking between you and your bureaucratic advisers.

Prime Minister : (In Hindi) What is that ?

QUESTION : (In Hindi) Your views and the views of your advisers, who are bureaucrats, are not on the same lines. That is why there is some misunderstanding among the people that you are not able to keep a control on them. What are you doing to remove this misunderstanding?

PRIME MINISTER : (In Hindi) I don't agree that I have any difference of opinion with my colleagues who are bureaucrats. It is not true. But, whenever there is a change, a change in policies and mode of functioning, then everybody cannot adopt it with the same quickness. If there are certain objections and shortcomings in my policies, then it is their duty to discuss it with me and sort out. This is what I do always. If anything new occurs to me and since I am the Prime Minister, I never try to impose it on others. First, I tell them, discuss it with them and then ask them to tell how far it is practicable. They evaluate it in the light of their experience and share with me their ideas. Sometime, I overrule them and many

a time a new way is found. So, this is the routine and I don't think that our ways are different. This is true that when you have to take anything new to villagers, to grass roots, then everybody is not ready to accept it.

Many persons here are habitual to file work only and when the question of going to villages arise, then I have to go first, my Ministers go, then they follow us. When we ask them to go, they go and come back the same day. This is the way of administration; they have a way of working. There should be co-operation between officials and non-officials. Both should learn how to co-operate. Then only the work can go on smoothly. Neither I can work without them, nor can they do it without me. We are inseparable.

QUESTION : Sir, when you became the Prime Minister a year ago, you had applied your strategy of consensus to solve major national problems, but in regard to the recent Presidential and Vice-Presidential controversy, the parties from extreme left and even the parties from the right have said that you have made a unilateral declaration regarding the Presidential candidate. That is number one. Secondly, you had failed to accept the suggestion to link the choice of candidates for the Presidential and the Vice-Presidential election. Lastly, Mr. Vishwanath Pratap Singh has in his latest statement said that his stand has been vindicated in the case of the choice of the name of Vice-President. Since we do not have an opportunity to ask them, could you say briefly what is going on between the other left leaders?

PRIME MINISTER : Thank you for the question. You have given me a good opportunity to make things clear. I have always followed the methodology of consensus, sometimes with full success, sometimes with partial success, depending on the issue and depending on the response. In the case of the candidature of the President and the Vice-President I did consult all parties' leaders.

There is no question of my having taken any unilateral decision, I mean, in the sense that I came to a conclusion without asking anyone or without consulting anyone. But in this case we should understand that it is the Congress Party whose candidate happens to be the candidate chosen as the candidate of the ruling party. This has been the tradition always. I don't think there has been any other example. And no one objected, none of the parties, none of the leaders, objected to this method. The only question was whether you have a package of the President and the Vice-President. It would be rather odd for me to think of a Vice-Presidential candidate before the seat becomes vacant. I don't know what all of you would have written about me if I had done that. You please imagine that. I don't think it is on. I can talk about the

Vice-Presidential candidate only on the seventeenth of July, by which time the result of the Presidential election would have been announced and there would be a vacancy — we all know. We are confident, at least I am confident, that Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, who happens to be the Vice-President today, is going to be elected President. On the basis of that confidence I am saying now that there will be a vacancy created on the sixteenth of July. It is then that the succession for the Vice-Presidency would open, it is then that I would be right in starting another round of talks with other parties for the Vice-Presidential candidate. This is the position.

Question : You speak of making progress in Punjab. I would like to know your opinion on how you are going to turn the pace of peace. But the killings are continuing despite the elected Government. What happens next?

Prime Minister : Now, if election in Punjab or the political process in Punjab was started against very heavy odds — we all know what the odds have been—it is itself a positive achievement. No one can guarantee that a person with a gun, if he goes berserk, will not go into the street and shoot down a few people. If you or I or anyone thought that the advent of a democratic government would put a full stop to these incidents, probably we were not being realistic. What I would like to say in all humility is that today the democratic process has come to a stage where it has become effective with the people. The people are going to the Ministers, the Ministers are able to tour the areas, look after the needs of the people. Yes, even today some killings are taking place—that cannot be denied. But the fact remains that the democratic atmosphere which was missing for a number of years has been restored and, in fact, one of the Ministers himself would have been killed: he escaped very narrowly. So, the Ministers themselves are taking great risks to their lives, going to the people, trying to serve them and create the necessary bridges between the government and the people. This is what is happening in Punjab and this is a very heartening feature.

QUESTION : Mr. Prime Minister, will you define the priorities before the present Government among Kashmir, Punjab, Pakistan, controlling prices, mandir-masjid, the LTTE, economic stability, deteriorating law and order situation, etc?

PRIME MINISTER : No Prime Minister can afford to expect one problem to wait until another is solved. All are my priorities, and I will have to be doing my bit, doing my job on all the fronts simultaneously.

QUESTION : Mr. Prime Minister, there have been dramatic changes on the economic front during the one year that you have been in power. You have called some of these changes as irreversible. Of course, there are many voices of discord and dissent about the policies which have been enunciated. But my question is not on economic policies. While we have made dramatic changes in the economic front, we seem to be standing still on the political front. We have not moved forward in regard to the Kashmir issue, on the Babri Masjid question or even on Punjab. So, what are the policy measures you have in mind, and how do you propose to tackle these problems in the coming months? Could you please elaborate on that ?

PRIME MINISTER : I do not see how you can call it "stand still." If after years and years we have elections in Punjab, a popular Government installed there doing its best to struggle with the situation, to improve the situation, this cannot be "stand still."

In Kashmir from all accounts there has been an improvement. We are already talking in terms of holding elections in Kashmir, which we never did last year. How you can call this as "stand still," I cannot understand.

About Assam everyone knows that after the Congress Government was installed, the popular Government was installed in Assam, the situation in regard to the ULFA has improved enormously. I do not say that it has been completely solved. But it has been solved to a very large extent. I do not understand how you call that "stand still."

Take any matter. There has been some forward movement, and I can say with some amount of confidence that we have not neglected any of these matters. We have tried our very best to make some forward movement and not just stood still.

QUESTION : Mr. Prime Minister, there have been long talks and speculation regarding some proposed package for Punjab. Would you please elaborate what actually this package is and when you are going to make some announcement? Do you propose to go to Amritsar to make some announcement in this regard?

PRIME MINISTER : In fact, I had not made any statement to that effect, I had not made a mention of any package. My only package — I said it again and again — is the Rajiv-Longowal Accord. That was the package I was talking about. I was thinking about. Today again the question of a package or the mention of a package is being made again and again. I would like to say that I do not go by labels. I go by the content.

There are a few outstanding issues. There is hardly a week during which we do not have some in-depth study of one of these issues. So, the examination of all these issues is going on. The discussion with the State Governments is also going on. We are not publicising it because these things have a knack of becoming more difficult by publicity. We have to understand that it is not just a question of Punjab. There are other States involved, there are other interests involved. The Central Government has to be very careful in taking step after step. It has to be a step-by-step approach. So, this is what we are going to do.

What I would like to say is that the solution to the outstanding issues on Punjab has defied solutions for some time ; defied our efforts for quite some time, but I am hopeful that in the new context of a popular Government, which knows the opinions of the people, which can perhaps interpret the intentions and the opinions of the people and the views of the people in general, and also with the efforts that we are making to talk to other parties, it cannot be just with the State Government, it has to be across the board, it has to be a wide spectrum of interests of political opinion to which we have to address ourselves. With all these efforts I am hopeful that sooner than later we will be able to come up to solutions. I cannot give you an exact timeframe, but, as I said, it will be sooner than later.

QUESTION : Mr. Prime Minister, there have been allegations that many of your Cabinet colleagues are involved in the security scam. Will you agree to an Opposition demand for a Joint Parliamentary Committee to probe the scam?

PRIME MINISTER : If any of my Ministers is involved in it he will not be in the Ministry. Please take that as a box item, if you wish.

We have discovered certain irregularities, certain offences on the part of certain persons. We have taken speedy steps to set the law in motion. The CBI has gone into it. It is still going into it. People have been arrested. They have proceeded against. Their properties have been attached. All that could be done under the law has been done. A special court also has come into existence. It will be looking into these cases and punishing these people wherever an offence is made out. Now this is in regard to what has happened, but this is not the end of the story. I am taking a little more time because I want that there need be no further questions on this. Now, what about the future? Is there anything wrong in the system? Are there any leakages in the system? Are there any holes through which this has been happening? That is something which we will have to go into. Obviously the special courts will not be able to go into. On that aspect let me tell you

categorically that my mind is open. What needs to be done on that aspect, I am prepared to be convinced, I am prepared to discuss and my mind is open.

QUESTION : Mr. Prime Minister, the Left parties have decided to support the Congress candidate in the Presidential poll. Are you hopeful that the Left-Congress alliance will continue in the future also?

PRIME MINISTER : Why not? It is not a question of alliance. What I have been asking for is issue-based support on issues of national importance where we think the same way, hold the same views. 'Alliance' is something a little different from what I am talking about. What I am asking the parties to do is when there is a national issue, cutting across parties, we would require all the parties to react to that issue, to respond to that issue, in such a way that we present a national united front and this is what I have been requesting all the parties to do. In this particular case it so happens that the Left parties have decided to throw in their lot with the candidature of Dr. Sharma. I am grateful to them. Other parties also have thrown in their weight with Dr. Sharma. I am grateful to them also. So like this on issues, on matters of great importance to the nation, we come together and present a united front.

QUESTION : (In Hindi) My question is on economic issues. In coming monsoon session the present opposition will move no confidence motion against your government. Do you want to say something about this?

PRIME MINISTER : (In Hindi) They will speak who want to move this motion.

QUESTION : Mr. Prime Minister, having brought about radical changes in the economic policy, how receptive are you to the idea of extending this to the political front? Have you in mind a truly federal India with autonomous States with the Union limiting itself to Defence, Currency and Foreign affairs?

PRIME MINISTER : I am sorry, Mr. Satya Prakash. I am not able to find a nexus. Let us discuss if you have anything more, more elaborate, less unclear because I am not able to find a nexus, I am not able to find a parallel between the two.

You should not be taking the time of the others. But if you have any ideas, please come to me, we will discuss. I have no problems.

QUESTION : Mr. Biju Patnaik's suggestion is that a new Constituent Assembly be constituted to take a fresh look at the Constitution.

PRIME MINISTER : I will discuss it with Biju dada, no problem. I am in constant touch with him.

QUESTION : Mr. Prime Minister, you have taken a number of economic measures very quickly which were truly commendable. But now a feeling has grown that the Government is slowing down the pace of reforms. Probably as you have been saying that it requires a political consensus. But the economy is not going to wait for your political consensus because in the meanwhile stagflation has set in. Now the subsidy issue is still left undecided. The inflation rate is high because you cannot reduce the administrative expenditure for practical considerations. On the fertilizer subsidy you cannot decide for political considerations. The banks' lending rate cannot be reduced for banks' profitability consideration. Now, does it mean giving up the growth of the economy for these very obvious considerations?

PRIME MINISTER : Well, I am not going to give up any of these. The only thing is that I have been told by several experts in other countries that when you bring in reforms, quick reform is good, but too quick a reform is not good. I have been told by very responsible people. You can catapult yourself into a more difficult situation because making a reform too quick and running after it too much, will land you in difficulties. So, I am not worried, I am not at all bothered, about slowing down. In fact, I do not think that there has been any slowing down. Also, it needs a lot of administrative, legal, sometimes constitutional, arrangements to be made or the existing arrangements to be altered. Now, that takes time. Subordinate legislation takes even a longer time, to make rules and regulations, and if one of the rules made is wrong, then it becomes a gold mine for the lawyers. Anyone can go and bring a stay order from the court and then the whole process comes to a grinding halt. So, one has to be very careful and, at the same time, as quick as possible. So, I am not worried about the pace at all. I am happy about the direction, I am happy about the impact which it has made, and I am happy about the expected impact which anyone can anticipate under the circumstances. Facts and figures, everything, speak for themselves and, therefore, there is really no cause for worry.

QUESTION : Mr. Prime Minister, you are democratic and true to that, you have given the utmost importance to holding organisational elections in your party, but still some gaps have been left. Some Pradesh Congress (I) Committees' Presidents have not been nominated for long and in some States, the Presidents are nominated, but are not given the executive powers. The Congress (I) Working Committee is not full and the Parliamentary Board is not constituted. Are there any special reasons or you are not able to find time for this?

PRIME MINISTER : Thank you. I think this is also one of the matters which I wanted to explain in some detail. After twenty years, we have plunged into the process of elections, people had forgotten, more or less, how to elect in the Congress! Mostly, their sights were on Delhi and they did not want to take the responsibility of electing A and defeating B. It has come to that. I have seen it, I have experienced it. So, the easiest way out is for some elderly gentleman sitting in Delhi or the President sitting in Delhi and saying that X will be the PCC (I) President and everybody follows. It is a different matter that the very next day, always some people start sniping at him. This was happening. For the first time, we have had regular elections. In spite of that, old habits come to the fore in some States and they refuse to elect. We sent observers. We fixed the dates. We asked them to elect. But the result was they did not want elections and they passed resolutions authorising me to nominate the Presidents.

I did not like this at all. But when the Resolution came, I made my own enquiry, I made my own consultations. And after a good deal of consultation, I have appointed, I have nominated the Presidents. Now it is coming to Secretaries, it is coming to Executives. How many can I nominate? At least, at that level, there has to be some exercise. I am asking them to make that exercise. I am refusing to go into every small thing. So, this is taking some more time. And, of course, Adiraju is correct that I do not get all the time that is needed for this exercise to be done by me, apart from my own disinclination to do so. So, this is taking time, but it would not take the length of time that it used to take in the past. We will complete all these things.

QUESTION : You have not answered the second part.

PRIME MINISTER : The second part is only this that I will complete. We will see that all the committees are in place. I am calling meetings of the PCC Presidents, asking them to come up with their own views on the Executives. We will sit with them. We will see if they are balanced lists and so on. And we will do it. And in some cases, it has been done already. It is not as if the whole of the country is undecided. Only some States need to be decided; others have been decided.

QUESTION : Mr. Prime Minister, you have decided that those who were defeated in the Parliament would not be taken in the Rajya Sabha. But when it came to appointing General Secretaries of your Party, the office which is better than the MP's office, the people who were defeated were appointed General Secretaries. What have you to say on this?

PRIME MINISTER : The people who were defeated in the organisational elections were not taken. I keep both separate. I prefer to keep them separate.

QUESTION : Economic reforms apart, you will agree that the common man is concerned with the price rise. Would you be able to tell us to what extent you have been able to roll back the prices as per your manifesto?

PRIME MINISTER : Yes, I have said so many times that that is one of the items which we could not complete as promised in the manifesto. It will take more time. But at the same time, maybe in today's situation, there has been some holding up of the further rise of prices. The inflation figure for today, I am told, is about 11.4. Before coming here, I got it from the Finance Minister. He has put it at 11.45 which is a clear indication that it is coming down, the index is coming down. How much it is being reflected in actual retail prices, I am not in a position to say. This I have said in many of my statements that there is one part of the manifesto which we have not been able to fulfil within the time stipulated in the manifesto. I have no hesitation in repeating it.

QUESTION : Mr. Prime Minister, your Minister for Water Resources, Mr. Shukla, proposed seven water grids, linking Mahanadi and Cauvery. Mr. Subramanian Swamy of the Janata Party made a *padayatra* demanding the same. But the Chief Minister of your own State, Mr. Janardhan Reddy, has condemned the same proposal. What is your action on this?

PRIME MINISTER : I have no action on the matter. People are expressing their views, some by walking, some by driving, some by flying. What can I say?

QUESTION : (In Hindi) Mr. Prime Minister, what steps have been taken to improve the educational backwardness and financial conditions of minorities by this government in one year and what are the further steps proposed to be taken in near future.

PRIME MINISTER : (In Hindi) At present legal safeguards have been given to the minorities. You know about this and as a result of that, I understand, those things that could not be done earlier are now made possible. Please wait and see how much we can go further.

QUESTION : Mr. Prime Minister, I have a question relating to Kashmir. You have been quoted that you intend to give, you want to give, some autonomy to Kashmir. Is it correct? What is your concept of autonomy to Kashmir?

PRIME MINISTER : I have not said anything about the exact amount of autonomy in the case of Kashmir. What I have said is that there

are different opinions in the country about the autonomy to be given to Kashmir, starting from the BJP's demand to scrap Article 370, and going right up to the demand that only a few subjects should remain with the Centre; all the other subjects should be transferred to the State. We have a very wide spectrum before us. That is all I have said. I have not expressed any opinion on where that point has to come, because the time has not yet come. This is a question which we have to examine further. Whom do you examine? Whom are you going to talk with? Are you going to talk to the Governor of Kashmir? Are you going to come to a settlement, on a question like this, with anyone other than a representative Government? And where is the representative Government? You do not talk of naming the child before you are married.

QUESTION : When do you hope to have a representative Government there?

PRIME MINISTER : You want to know when the Government is going to come into existence there? Is that right? I have said that. The Home Minister has said that. While we have categorically said that we want a people's Government, a popular Government, in Kashmir, after free and fair elections, we have not been able to pinpoint the exact time within which it comes because, before elections take place, we want to see that the cult of gun is controlled, at least, to some extent, to enable us to see that the elections take place. That is the priority. That is what we are engaged in. We have made our intention absolutely clear that until a popular Government comes in Kashmir, many of these knotty problems, difficult problems, will not be resolved because you have no interlocutor. You do not know anyone to speak to. The State Government has not come. We have told everyone. We will ensure that the elections are free and fair; people come and participate in the elections; people do their bit for the people of Kashmir, on behalf of the people of Kashmir. That is what we are inviting them to do.

QUESTION : Mr. Prime Minister, you have asked the Chief Ministers of Punjab and Haryana to hold talks for solving the Punjab problem. But recently, the Punjab Chief Minister has come out with a statement suggesting that the Punjab Accord should be modified and amended. What is the view of the Centre in this regard?

PRIME MINISTER : I would like to remind you of what happened in the past. Both the States happen to be under the Congress rule now. Sometimes one is tempted to push through some solution, making both of them agreeing. I do not propose to do that. It is not a question of two Congress Chief Ministers deciding, it is a

question of the entire people of the States being taken into confidence and something which is acceptable to both of them being thrashed out. So, that is not the methodology. Yes, being Chief Ministers, naturally they will discuss. They will come to me, I will discuss with them jointly and separately. There are other States also involved like Rajasthan. So, this discussion will go on at different levels with different people on different subjects, but I do not subscribe to the view that because both the Chief Ministers happen to be from the same party they could sit together and bring up some ready-made solution. Even there also each Chief Minister has to think of the interests of his State. This is quite natural. I cannot find fault with them. We have the case of Mr. Subramanian and Mr. Alagesan resigning from the Central Cabinet for a steel plant. Some of you at least might remember. They were both very good congressmen, but they had to do it because they had to think of the interest of their State as they saw it. Therefore, this cuts across the party line. This is not a Congress matter, this is matter of the people and, therefore, we have to deal with it much more carefully. And that is what I am thinking to do. They are talking to each other, they are not able to find complete agreement, I am not surprised about that, but we will get to the solutions in due course.

QUESTION : (In Hindi) Newspapers brought out this news that a pit has been dug near the Babri Masjid and Ram Janam Bhumi which is risky in terms of security of that place. My question is this that what your government is doing about this and secondly in what forum and time you will solve this burning problem.

PRIME MINISTER : (In Hindi) The forum we have selected to solve this problem is National Integration Council. I am happy to say that whenever council discusses about this a positive result and good suggestion comes out. Yesterday our Home Minister told me that he talked to the Sub-Committee who visited that place and came to the conclusion that the meeting of the whole National Integration Council should be called as soon as possible. He is taking necessary steps in this direction. In that meeting this subject will be raised and will be discussed and I hope the positive suggestion will come out.

QUESTION : Mr. Prime Minister, you have singled out Pakistan amongst your neighbours on the basis of your recent experience. But having closed your options on the issues like Kashmir and NPT, how do you propose to improve relations with Pakistan?

PRIME MINISTER : I have stated my case in unambiguous terms as Pakistan has also stated its case in unambiguous terms.

I have also made it clear that in spite of the different approach we have to be talking to the neighbours. We are neighbours. That makes all the difference. I made it very clear immediately after our meeting in Rio, just outside the door, that in spite of the fact that we have not been able to come to the same conclusion the talks will continue, should continue. This is a long process. Both of us realize that this is a long process. There are no shortcuts in this.

QUESTION : Mr. Prime Minister, the US has passed strictures on human rights *vis-a-vis* India while in their own country a committee has indicted the US Government. What have you to say on the US stance *vis-a-vis* India on human rights?

PRIME MINISTER : I have not said anything about the US. They must have said something about us. Human rights has become one of the general topics of criticism in many quarters but one thing is clear that our record in human rights has been quite good— not that there have not been excesses. I agree there have been excesses here and there but they have been looked into. Whenever excesses have been brought to light they have been looked into and effective steps have been taken and that is the essence of human rights. So, our record is not one about which we have any regrets. We always hope for improvement; that goes without saying. That is why the Congress manifesto has said that we will set up our own Human Rights Commission within the country. What does that show? That shows that we are not afraid of anyone: that shows that we are prepared to be judged, we are prepared to judge ourselves first, before others start judging us from a distance. So, I think our conscience is clear, our hands are clean, so far as human rights are concerned. And we will take action whatever action is needed, to see that our record is even better than what it is today.

PRIME MINISTER : You have been saying for quite some time now that there is no question of India signing the NPT so long as no changes are brought about in it. The NPT is due for a review in 1995. What kind of changes would you like to see made in the NPT so that India can consider signing it?

PRIME MINISTER : The most obvious change that I would suggest is that the NPT, or whatever you might call it after 1995, becomes non-discriminatory. If that is ensured, if it is also ensured that there will be no nuclear weapons on the face of the earth, anywhere in the hands of anyone, if that is the end-result which is envisaged, I would be happy because that is what I stand for. That is what many nations, who have even signed the NPT, also stand for— for your information. We did not sign it because our position is clear that we do not want to sign something which we consider discriminatory. And today to think of signing the NPT looks very

odd because within the next one year the review process is going to start. So what are you going to sign? So let us wait until 1995. We want the review to be done in a particular manner, the end-result to be a particular arrangement which we consider non-discriminatory. That will be the time to consider what to do with that.

QUESTION : According to the reports available, the Sri Lankan government is not co-operating sincerely in the Rajiv Gandhi Assassination Case. Would you respond to this situation?

PRIME MINISTER : I think this matter is being handled by our High Commissioner. I would not like to say anything beyond this. Our efforts will continue.

QUESTION : My question is about the situation created by the insistence—I would not say “pressure”—of some powers that we either sign the NPT or accept the safeguards in some other way. In that context, what do you think of the suggestion made in India by some quarters that we declare ourselves a nuclear power and proceed from that point onwards? After all, we did have a test.

PRIME MINISTER : The answer is very simple. We cannot declare ourselves what we are not.

QUESTION : Mr. Prime Minister, what we have seen for the past few days is that every time the working committee or other party leaders meet, they repose all authority in you. When you started as Prime Minister, it was kind of collective leadership, but now it is being said that it is leading to a unitary leadership, and you want all authority to be reposed in you. A few moments earlier you said that you don't want all authority to be given to you. But in practice it is not so.

PRIME MINISTER : It is not my practice. I want to assure you that whatever I have to do, I do after full consultation. In fact, in the next few days we will have a regular Parliamentary Board. The Working Committee itself is not fully constituted. There have been gaps. But once the Parliamentary Board comes into being, there will be no difficulty at all.

If the Working Committee wants me to talk to some other leaders on a particular subject and come to some conclusion and they think that it is good enough, then, I don't see how I can run away from that responsibility. This is all that has happened. I don't think I wanted any powers to be given to me. I never wanted any powers to be given to me. I want the Working Committee to function as the Working Committee has always functioned.

QUESTION : Sir, the world has by and large welcomed your economic reforms, but there is still a lingering fear that your Government could be unstable on two or three accounts.

First of all, the minority character.

Second, something that could trip you off, is drought, the unforeseen problems that it could unleash.

The third factor could be the scam.

These are all known factors that have ejected governments, very comfortable looking governments from the saddles. How do you hope to manage with these three probable threats, and what is your response?

PRIME MINISTER : I am not aware of any government in India having been thrown out because of a drought in the first place.

Two, about the scam, I have already told you what is being done and what will be done, if necessary.

About the reforms I have made quite clear that the reforms have not just come from some inspiration. It is not like that. They have been worked properly; they have been deliberately brought about, deliberately drafted and what was done was deliberately done. I don't think we will want to undo them. Their pace may be slowed down, as somebody pointed out, sometimes deliberately, sometimes because its causes are beyond our control. All that is possible. But the direction will not change, the intent will not change, the thrust will not change. This is what we have decided. We have no fear of being at any time forced to change the course. That kind of thing is not there. And if still people want to doubt and as it is said, संशयात्मा विनश्यति, what can I do about it?

QUESTION : Mr. Prime Minister, in spite of all the assertions and statements on Jammu and Kashmir some reports rightly or wrongly indicate that the writ of the Government whether here or in Srinagar, does not run. It is so at least in a large part of the Valley. What have you to say on it?

Secondly, sometime ago you had promised, at least reportedly, that the controversial Chief Election Commissioner will be changed, removed or whatever it is. Are you still thinking of it or you have given it up?

PRIME MINISTER : The first thing, it is wrong to say the writ does not run in the Valley. As for second, I have not yet come across any Constitutional provision where the Prime Minister can change the Chief Election Commissioner. Unless one quotes a chapter and a verse to me, I cannot respond to that.

QUESTION : Sir, how many Sikhs and Hindus have been killed in Afghanistan?

PRIME MINISTER : I am very sorry. I could not give you the figure. I just don't have that with me. But it is a matter to be verified.

There the situation has worsened. They are in bad shape. The effort is going on to evacuate them, to bring them back to India. Those things I know, but the exact figure of casualties is not with me.

QUESTION : (In Hindi) A robot welcomed you in Japan. Will you suggest that robots and mechanised system should be used in Indian industries so that machine manufacturing units may attain accuracy?

Second question is that we import so many goods from foreign countries, while foodgrains are being smuggled out and exported through Nepal and Bangladesh. We are not giving enough quota to Fair Price Shops. As you have promised in Rajasthan, how much quota has increased for the Fair Price Shops?

PRIME MINISTER : (In Hindi) The interesting thing about robots is that they say what is programmed in them. They do not speak unless it is programmed. Population in Japan is less. They said very clearly to me that the problem they are facing is that they don't have enough manpower. So, use of robots is very natural in those countries. Moreover, as far as accuracy is concerned, robots may do better than human being. But, in our circumstances, I cannot say that our lakhs and crores of people should be displaced by robots.

Secondly, what you are saying in regard to the foodgrains is correct to some extent that the foodgrains we were despatching to North-East could hardly reach there, according to reports reaching here a few days ago. During the course of inquiry it came to light that the foodgrains were being smuggled out also. We would do our best to plug it. We have been making efforts to plug it and we have achieved success in our efforts. It is our endeavour to take all possible steps to plug whatever leakages are taking place.

QUESTION : Has the Government taken any decision on additional funds to the drought-affected States over and above the Calamity Relief Fund? Central teams were sent to four or five States, what has been the outcome of their visit?

PRIME MINISTER : In the case of some States, some accommodation has been made. I cannot give you the exact figures. But in some case advance Calamity Relief Fund has been released and in some cases some special accommodation also has been made. But you will appreciate that the crunch here, the financial crunch here, which we are all suffering from, does not allow the Central Government to go beyond a point.

QUESTION : Mr. Prime Minister, I am asking a question about the journalists themselves. You know that there is an Act called

Working Journalists Act which has been passed by the Parliament of India. Under that Act, a Wage Board was constituted and its recommendations have been notified. Two-thirds of the newspaper establishments have refused to implement that. Is it not a challenge to the authority of the Government? If that is so, what the government is going to do or will the Government establish the next Wage Board to improve the conditions of the working journalists?

PRIME MINISTER : Here is your man. He will have to answer that.

AJIT KUMAR PANJA (Minister for Information and Broadcasting) : Sir, you have asked me to answer this question which in fact Mr. Sangma has to answer. But I can say that I am having dialogues with some of the representatives. Certainly they can come to me if they have got any other point. There are some difficulties. Alongwith Mr. Sangma I had held discussions. I am very much directly affected because this is my Department. I can meet all of you in this regard. Let us see how quickly it could be resolved.

PRIME MINISTER : You see that I have got some trouble shooters.

QUESTION : (In Hindi) Honourable Prime Minister, you have just talked about grass roots and said that regional languages are important for grass roots. Are you taking some steps to include regional languages, including Rajasthani, in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution?

PRIME MINISTER : (In Hindi) Rajasthani?

QUESTION : (In Hindi) What steps are you taking to include Rajasthani, Manipuri and Dogri languages in the Eighth Schedule? Recently, there was a news item that in a meeting of all parties called by you, it was decided that all those languages will be included in the Eighth Schedule which enjoy recognition of Central Sahitya Academy. Would you please elaborate?

PRIME MINISTER : (In Hindi) You have put such a question for which the answer is half positive and half negative. Only some languages are being considered. Other languages, which you have mentioned, are not being considered. However, it is true that demands are being made about other languages also.

QUESTION : (In Hindi) Rajasthani has contributed a lot. Would you like to say specially something about it?

PRIME MINISTER : (In Hindi) This is what I am saying. I am not mentioning the name of any language here, otherwise there would be trouble. I am saying that some languages are being considered and perhaps other languages will have to be considered. The question is not which language is to be included in the Eighth Schedule, but that, what would be the result of including a particular language in the Eighth Schedule.

How that language would be benefited. Since a list has been made, all these questions will have to be sorted out. Otherwise the list will be as long as our ballot paper nowadays. We have to see what is the advantage of including those languages in the list. So we are trying to find out the basis of it. Home Ministry is looking into it. We will be able to tell you in a few days as to what will be the outcome of it.

QUESTION : It is almost three months since the Bofors issue rocked the Parliament and the then External Affairs Minister, Mr. Madhavsingh Solanki had to resign. At that time, you had said that you would come out with the details as to who was the lawyer who gave the note to Mr. Solanki. Can you please tell us who the lawyer was?

PRIME MINISTER : I have not made any promise that I would find the lawyer for you! No. And, to the extent that we have made inquiries, the CBI itself has said that it is just not possible for them to find out the name of the lawyer or the identity of the lawyer. They have come up against a blank wall. That is where the matter ends. What we can do is to use our own agencies to find out what it is. Our agency itself has said that if in a foreign country somebody gives a paper to someone how it is possible for anyone to go and identify. After all their efforts, they have come with this feedback, that they are not in a position to identify him.

QUESTION : Mr. Prime Minister, you have taken a lot of action on very many fields. But, on the Cabinet reshuffle, you have not taken any action so far.

PRIME MINISTER : You have got so many topics to talk about. You talk about Cabinet reshuffle when you run out of topics.

QUESTION : (In Hindi) India does not have a full-fledged Minister for external affairs at a time when political events are taking place around Indian sub-continent. What is happening in Afghanistan? What has happened in Asia recently? Mr. Prime Minister, when the Labour Minister resigned a few days ago his portfolio was taken over by you. When the Minister for External Affairs resigned, his portfolio was also taken over by you. You had stated some days ago that the number of Ministers in the Cabinet would be reduced. Is it how the number of Ministers in the Cabinet will be reduced?

PRIME MINISTER : (In Hindi) I can only tell you this much that wherever you have no full-fledged Minister there you have got a fuller-fledged Minister.

VIII
Tributes, Forewords
and Messages

Govind Ballabh Pant

A COLOSSUS AMONG men, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant's contribution to our freedom struggle and to the building of modern India will long be remembered. His life and work which were a source of inspiration to his own generation, have continued to inspire the generations which have followed.

His great patriotism, towering intellect, sense of purpose, organisational ability and oratory were assets during our freedom struggle. After the country became free Pandit Pant's stature, administrative capabilities, parliamentary skills and commitment to the social and economic uplift of the people imparted strength and lustre to the many a high offices which he held. Till the very end he worked indefatigably in the service of the people.

The birth anniversary of Pandit Pant is an occasion to rededicate ourselves to the task to which great patriots like Pandit Pant had addressed themselves, the task of building a strong, united and a more humane India.

Dr. G.S. Dhillon

THE PASSING AWAY of Dr. G.S. Dhillon has left a deep void. His was a life devoted to public service. He left an indelible imprint upon the many a high office which he held. His contribution to the strengthening of democratic norms and to the various facets of our national life will long be remembered. The country is poorer today in the absence of Dr. Dhillon. We shall always recall with warmth his affable personality and remember with admiration his insight and perceptiveness on matters of national importance.

Homage to Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, 9 September 1991

Condolence message on the passing away of Dr. G. S. Dhillon, 28 March 1992

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

THE LIFE OF Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a relentless struggle to secure for the weaker sections their legitimate rights and ensure for them those conditions which would enable them to lead more meaningful lives. His commitment to social justice was uncompromising and his struggle towards this end found its fruition in the Indian Constitution, in the drafting of which he played a crucial role.

On the occasion of Ambedkar Jayanti , let us recall the life and work of this great son of India who personified the dignity of the human being. His example will continue to be a source of inspiration to our people in building a strong India based on social justice.

Satyajit Ray

I AM DEEPLY grieved to hear of the passing away of your husband Shri Satyajit Ray. The people of India and people the world over are poorer today with Satyajit Ray no longer among us. I share with you your deep grief, as do millions of our countrymen, across the length and breadth of this land of ours which Satyajit Ray knew so well and immortalised in all its moods and nuances, through the medium of the cinema, with the sensitivity of an artist and the perceptiveness of a thinker. We will miss his warm personality, his brilliance, his human touch and affection.

Homage to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on his birth anniversary, 6 April 1992

Condolence message on the passing away of Satyajit Ray, eminent film maker, 23 April 1992

Vinayak Krishna Gokak

I HAVE LEARNT with grief and shock of the passing away of Prof. Vinayak Krishna Gokak. It seems almost yesterday when I was privileged to be in the midst of a distinguished gathering to honour him. His writings spanned a wide range of subjects—poetry, fiction, travelogues, aesthetics and literary criticism. His deep learning, perceptiveness and imagination enriched his writings which will long be treasured by those who are fortunate to continue to know him virtually at first hand through his work. The universal world of literature is poorer today.

Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference

I AM VERY happy that the Indian Branch and the staff Branches of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association have the honour to host the thirty-seventh Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in New Delhi.

The Conference will bring together parliamentarians and legislators from over 30 countries, members of the wider community of the Commonwealth. They will come from different continents and will represent many races, cultures and socio-economic system. The delegates themselves will represent a wide spectrum of political opinion as they come from many different political parties. But they will all share a commitment to democracy, political pluralism and faith in one of the vital institutions of democratic polity, namely the Parliament. A functioning Parliament in itself also implies values of tolerance, accommodation and a spirit of co-operation.

India is privileged to be hosting the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference for the third time. Not only is India the world's most

Condolence message on the passing away of Vinayak Krishna Gokak, eminent litterateur and Jnanpith Award winner, 28 April 1992

Foreword to a Souvenir brought out on the occasion of the thirty-seventh Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, 4 September 1991

populous democracy, but our own commitment to democratic norms and parliamentary institutions is firm, deep-rooted and widely held. The strength and resilience of our political and parliamentary system have been tested and well proven, specially during the turbulent periods in our public and political life.

I am happy to learn that the Lok Sabha Secretariat will be bringing out a Souvenir to commemorate the occasion of the thirty-seventh Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference. I understand that the volume will include articles on constitutional and parliamentary issues of Commonwealth Parliaments and a special section on the Indian Parliament and Legislatures. Enhanced public awareness and interest in the functioning of parliamentary institutions is vital for the health of democracy. I, therefore, find it eminently befitting that such a Souvenir is being brought out on this occasion. I do hope that the Souvenir will enjoy a wide circulation and readership, and will evoke much interest.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad

THE MANTLE OF the first presidency of the Republic of India fell on Dr. Rajendra Prasad at a time when our country was in the formative stage. The Presidency came to Dr. Rajendra Prasad naturally for he was the person who as the President of Constituent Assembly, had guided the course of Constitution making. He thus played an active role not only in the freedom struggle of the country but also in the framing of the new Constitution.

As a freedom fighter and one of the front-ranking leaders, the role of Dr. Rajendra Prasad has been acclaimed and recognised by the entire country. He was among the very first of our national leaders who came in contact with Mahatma Gandhi when he embarked upon his great mission on return from South Africa. Dr. Rajendra Prasad remained one of the devoted disciples of the Mahatma.

Shri Valmiki Choudhary, who has compiled and edited this series has been associated with Rajendra Babu both during his imprisonment in the freedom movement and his days in Rashtrapati

Bhawan. In bringing out these volumes, he has performed a significant task which merits our appreciation.

Festival of India

THE FESTIVAL OF India in Germany has special significance. It is a cultural presentation dedicated to the people of Germany and a manifestation of the warmth and affection which we have for the German people. It is also a token of our high regard for Germany's contribution to Indology. The Festival with its variety of displays in the form of exhibitions, music and dance concerts, folk and tribal arts and films and seminars is a tribute to the cultural ties between our two countries.

We are particularly happy that the Festival of India will be the first such presentation in unified Germany. It will help in further strengthening the spirit of co-operation and friendship between our two countries. I am sure that the Festival will be an important landmark in the story of our partnership.

The people of India join me in wishing the German people all happiness and prosperity. It will be our endeavour to make the Festival a joyous and memorable happening.

World Population Day

THE WORLD POPULATION Day focuses on a subject which is of global concern and of particular importance to a country like ours engaged in a struggle to eradicate poverty and improve the quality of life of our people. This is an occasion for us to re-double our efforts to create population consciousness, attain a more acceptable rate of population growth and create conditions which will help utilise the full potential of our population as a development resource.

Message to the Festival of India in Germany, 2 July 1991

Message on the World Population Day, 4 July 1991

The problems of allocating our scarce resources to competing demands has been further compounded by our fast growing population. The rate at which our population is expanding has prevented the full benefits of economic development from reaching our people, particularly the weaker sections. Vast numbers have to do without the basic amenities of life and other facilities which would have enabled them to live fuller lives. This has also told adversely on our efforts to utilise the full potential of our people for the development process.

Government is committed to creating conditions for improving the quality of life of our millions and will accord high priority to dealing with the problem of population. While government will do its utmost, the role of non-governmental organisations and individual volunteers in creating population consciousness among the people is of tremendous importance. Concerted efforts are needed to take the message of population consciousness to the remotest of remote areas. Our people must be made fully conscious of the fact that their own future depends upon the success of the population control programme. They must realise that it is the small family which holds the key to their prosperity and well-being.

Community-Based Education Programmes

I AM HAPPY to learn that the Sixth International Conference of the International Community Education Association is being held at Port of Spain.

Education is a basic human right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, for the human right to become meaningful it is necessary that equal opportunities for access thereto are created and sustained. In India, we have all along viewed universalisation of primary education and eradication of adult illiteracy as indispensable for the country's development. Our commitment to provide all opportunities for access to education is total and it is reflected in the National Policy of Education formulated in 1986.

Message to the Sixth International Conference of the International Community Educational Association held at Port of Spain, 29 July 1991

It is a happy augury that over 300 community educators from 60 countries are gathering in Trinidad and Tobago to deliberate on various aspects of community based education programmes at the grass root level. The deliberations of the Conference will, I am sure, enrich the thoughts and ideas on this important subject and provide a direction for further constructive action.

I send my greetings and best wishes to the organisers of the Conference and wish it all success.

Teachers' Day

THE FUTURE OF a country, particularly of a developing country like ours, depends in no small measure, upon the role played by the members of the teaching community. The values which they instill and the knowledge which they impart leave an indelible imprint upon the students and thus on the unfolding tomorrow.

As we move up the path of development, the challenges that we in India face are many and diverse. It is no exaggeration to say that we will have to make Herculean efforts to surmount these challenges. Millions of our people live in conditions of grinding poverty, a very large number still struggle under the weight of age-old prejudice. There has been impressive economic development but the full benefits of development have not reached those whose needs are greatest. We require to build a more just social order and accelerate the pace of economic development and generate more resources to meet the needs and aspirations of our people, even while we contend with an increasingly competitive international environment. Fissiparous elements who thwart progress by resorting to violence and by erecting barriers of casteism, communalism and regionalism have to be dealt with firmly. The mind must be cleared of the cobwebs of prejudice and we must aim at developing a more enquiring and rational outlook on life.

I know our teachers to be dedicated and professionally capable. They do face a lot of difficulties and working conditions require to be much better but I also know that problems notwithstanding, they strive for excellence, both for themselves and for their students.

There is in fact a close bond between the teacher and the student. Both look to each other in the pursuit of excellence.

The watchword for the future must be excellence. We require excellence in character and excellence in knowledge if we are to build a strong India, a more humane India, an India based on social justice. The pursuit of excellence has been a part of our age-old tradition of learning. We must draw upon this tradition as a bridge to the future.

I wish the members of the teaching community the very best on the occasion of Teachers' Day.

A Common Commitment

TODAY IS THE International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction. The United Nations General Assembly has designated the Decade of the 1990 as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. It has given a call to the international community to launch special initiatives, including the application of science and technology to help prevent natural disasters and to enhance our preparedness in dealing with them.

This year's theme "Natural Disasters, Development, Environment: A Common Commitment" helps focus attention on a problem which requires urgent attention. Environmental degradation is one of our major concerns. Not only is it in danger of reaching irreversible proportions, degradation of the environment is itself an important contributory cause of disasters like floods and droughts and is closely linked with a skewed pattern of economic development. The major challenge is to adopt a path of development which can lead to increased prosperity and is at the same time environment friendly.

Achieving the objective of reducing the occurrence of natural disasters calls for urgent and concerted action on the part of all—Government, voluntary agencies, local bodies, each and every citizen. On this important day let us all resolve to work with a sense of purpose and determination to prevent natural disasters by protecting the environment and repairing the damage caused to the

ecological system. We owe this to ourselves and to the generations which will follow.

Cultural Integration

I AM HAPPY to learn that the Bharat Cultural Integration Committee will soon be organising concerts and a devotional march for national integration.

Our unity is our most precious heritage. Diverse customs and influences have through the centuries conditioned Indian society and brought us together as a people. Different cultures have come together and enriched each other and in so doing have added to the richness of our national life. This has brought our people closer together in a strong bond of appreciation, co-operation and understanding. Whether it is in celebration or in adversity our people have stood together as one.

The process of emotional integration is a continuous one. It must be preserved and nurtured. We must guard against elements who for selfish, narrow gains try and sow discord between brother and brother. Such designs will, I am sure, be given an effective and resolute reply at all levels—at the level of the Government, the people and their representatives and organisations of public spirited citizens.

I congratulate the Bharat Cultural Integration Committee for its work in promoting national integration and wish it the very best in its future endeavours.

Child's Right to Special Care

THE THEME OF this year's Children's Day, "Child's Right to Special Care" is indeed a meaningful one. The proper physical and mental development of children is society's special charge. All possible care must be bestowed upon them to ensure the full blossoming

Message to the Bharat Cultural Integration Committee, 20 October 1991

Message to the Children's Day, 30 October 1991

of their personalities. This will stand them and society in good stead in the future.

We remember on this day Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Children were his young friends and he saw in them the hope for India's future. It is our duty to ensure that the upbringing of children is such which makes the future of the country secure in their hands. We must remember that they will make India tomorrow what we make of them today.

On the occasion of Children's Day, let us resolve to ensure that children get the very best of what society has to offer.

Jawaharlal Nehru Hockey Tournament

INDIA'S ASSOCIATION WITH hockey is, of course a long one. However, over the years people in many more countries have taken to the game and their numbers are increasing. This is not a matter for surprise as hockey is one of the most fascinating and interesting of games. The dexterity, fleet footedness, coordination and understanding among the team members, the artistry and the stamina which are required to play the game make it a challenge to players and a visual delight for spectators.

The Jawaharlal Nehru Hockey Tournament named after Jawaharlal Nehru, the great lover and patron of sports has over the years come to occupy an important place in the world of hockey. The twenty-eighth session of this Tournament beginning from 14 November, the birthday of Jawaharlal Nehru will, I am sure, provide a feast of interesting and good hockey.

I extend a very warm welcome to the participating teams from abroad and wish the Tournament all success.

Protecting Common Heritage

MONUMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL sites are our common heritage. They represent the cultural and aesthetic strings of their times and are a tribute to human endeavour and excellence.

India with its great variety of monuments and archaeological sites has indeed a rich heritage. This is, of course, a matter of pride but it also casts on us tremendous responsibility, for this heritage even while being ours also belongs to all humankind. We must ensure that we conserve it, not only for ourselves, but for the entire human family and for the generations which will follow. This heritage requires to be tended not just by Government agencies but by all. It is a social responsibility.

World Heritage Week is an occasion when we must once again resolve to commit ourselves to protect our common heritage.

All India Leprosy Workers' Conference

I AM HAPPY to learn that the Hind Kusht Nivaran Sangh and the Maharogi Seva Samiti are organising the XVII All India Leprosy Workers' Conference at Wardha. The Conference will, I am sure, provide an opportunity to those in the field to pool their experiences and chalk out a plan for future action.

Advances in medicine have made possible the early diagnosis and treatment of leprosy. However, the disease can be eradicated only if we are successful in breaking down the barrier of prejudice which inhabits those who suffer from coming forward to receive timely and sustained treatment. Voluntary organisations can play an important role in reaching out to them, giving them the warmth of human love and convincing them that society accepts them for its own. No less important is the need for voluntary organisations to make society aware of the fact that the feeling of dread associated

Message on the occasion of World Heritage Week, 1 November 1991

Message to the XVII All India Leprosy Workers' Conference, 7 November 1991

with the disease is born out of prejudice and ignorance and that leprosy is, in fact, completely curable. An attitudinal change can help create conditions which will facilitate the early diagnosis and treatment for the disease, as well as our efforts at rehabilitation.

I wish the XVII All India Leprosy Workers' Conference all success and wish those engaged in leprosy eradication the very best in their endeavours.

Mira Behn

IT IS INDEED a thoughtful gesture on the part of the Himalaya Seva Sangh to commemorate the life and work of Mira Behn in her birth centenary Year.

Mira Behn's life is a story of simplicity, courage and sacrifice. Even though of British origin, she found in India her spiritual home and shared with Mahatma Gandhi and Kasturba their hardships and their hope for a free India. She identified herself with the Indian people in their struggle against foreign rule, in their endeavour to build a new India based on social justice and the dignity of the individual.

The moral issues involved in India's struggle for freedom left a deep imprint upon Mira Behn, as they did on all right thinking people irrespective of the country to which they belonged. Mira Behn represented the voice of humanity, appalled at the bondage to which the Indian people were subject and to the injustice inherent in a situation which prevented them from shaping their own destiny. The story of Mira Behn's life will continue to inspire generations of Indians, as well as people the world over who are concerned with basic moral issues, with freedom and human dignity.

ASLV

THE DAWN TODAY herald yet another scientific triumph for the country as the Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle (ASLV) soared into the sky above Sri Harikota. With this successful launch the country had taken a significant step forward in developing its own satellite launching capability. The Launch is an important milestone on the road to development and progress. It is indeed a moral booster for the scientific community which has worked indefatigably and with dedication in developing scientific application for the service of our people, for improving their quality of life and giving them a better tomorrow.

My congratulations to our scientists and to our people on this great achievement.

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